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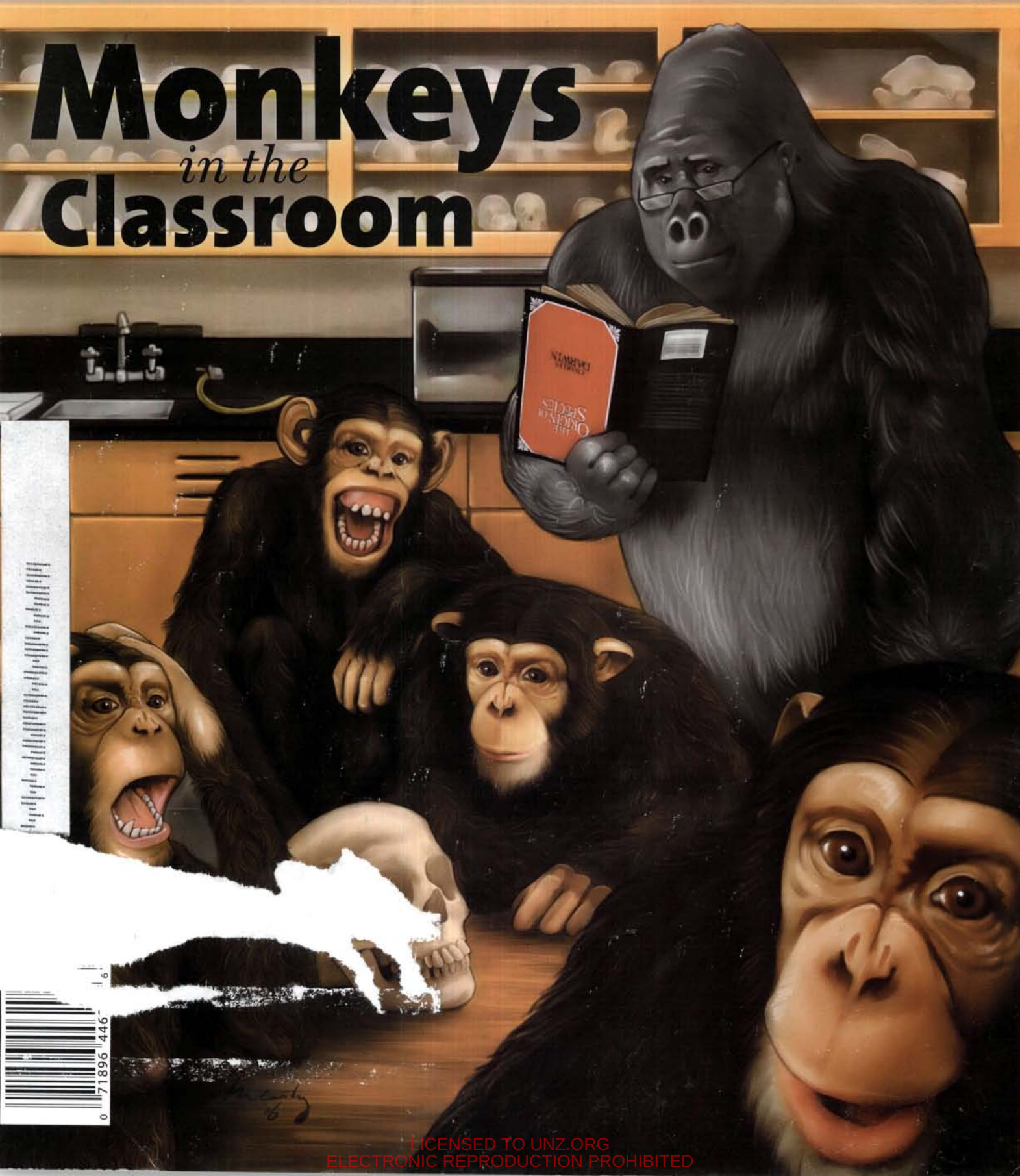

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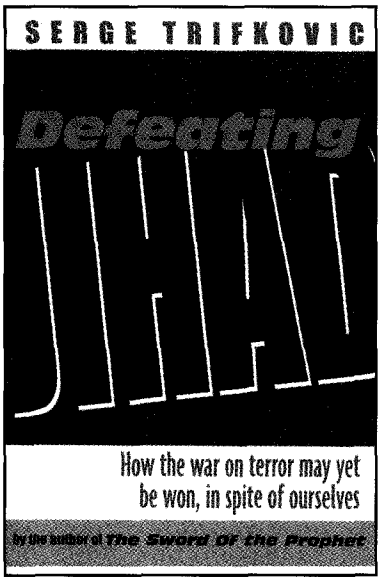
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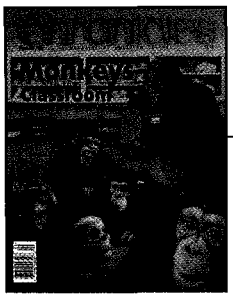

PERSPECTIVE

Let's Call the Whole Thing Off 10
by Thomas Fleming

The right to an opinion.

VIEWS

Educated at Home 14
by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.
The pleasure that comes with struggle.

The Supreme Court, Globalization, and the Teaching of Religion 17
by Tom Landess
Shaping society.

Education to the Rescue 20
by Troy Kickler
How Radical Republican teachers reconstructed the South.

Too Much Monkey Business 23
by James O. Tate
Inherit the agitprop.

NEWS

Nation-Building and the U.S. Military 26
by Robert D. Hickson
Reexamining America's Role.

REVIEWS

Is Ann Coulter Among the Prophets? 28
by Robert Stacy McCain

Ann Coulter: *Godless: The Church of Liberalism*

Thomas Fleming on George Garrett's *Empty Bed Blues* ◆ **Mark Royden Winchell** on Walter Sullivan's *Nothing Gold Can Stay: A Memoir* ◆ **Leon Hadar** on Ted Galen Carpenter's *A Collision Course Over Taiwan: America's Coming War With China* ◆ **Christopher Check** on William Gilmore Simms' *A City Laid Waste: The Capture, Sack, and Destruction of the City of Columbia* ◆ 31

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Arizona: Tax Credits and Education Reform: No Simple Task by Tim Sifert 39

VITAL SIGNS

FOREIGN POLICY: **Neocons, Naxalites, and National Demise** by Joseph E. Fallon 44

COLUMNS

THE BARE BODKIN 13
by Joseph Sobran

HERESIES 36
by Aaron D. Wolf

THE ROCKFORD FILES 37
by Scott P. Richert

EUROPEAN DIARY 41
by Andrei Navrozov

THE AMERICAN INTEREST 42
by Srdja Trifkovic

IN THE DARK 46
Superman Returns
by George McCartney

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD 48
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

AMERICAN PROSCENIUM 6

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 7

POETRY
Riderless Horses 12
by Timothy Murphy

ON THE COVER

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Reconstructing Reconstruction

After describing the account of Reconstruction offered in an episode of PBS's *The American Experience* (*Breaking Glass*, July), Philip Jenkins concludes that, "Were we to sit down amicably with the producers of *American Experience*, or the academic experts they consulted, I am confident we would not encounter a gaggle of hard-faced Stalinists." His confidence is touching but, to some degree, misplaced.

The leading text on Reconstruction these days is Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*. In that 20-year-old tome, Foner laid out the reigning view of Reconstruction—that its chief shortcomings were that too little land was redistributed, too few white Southerners were disenfranchised for too short a time, too many of the historic rights of Englishmen were restored in the South at its conclusion, and the U.S. Army was removed from the South too soon—at excruciating length.

I well recall my first encounter with Foner's text. I was a first-semester graduate student at the University of Virginia in the fall of 1992, and the book was required reading for one of my classes and one of two texts between which students might choose in another. (The alternative to Foner was James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*, which is in every way compatible with Foner's account.) I read Foner's book, increasingly displeased as I made my way through it. I showed up for Michael Holt's colloquium on 19th-century politics doing a slow burn.

Asked by Holt what I thought of the text, I said that it was horribly one-sided and lamented the author's lack of perspective. The student who followed me gave the book a glowing evaluation and then said, "I guess my politics must differ from yours." She is now a professor at an East Coast school, and one of our colleagues who joined her in endorsing Foner's views is on the faculty of one of America's most venerable universities.

Flash forward to 1994: Glancing at the magazine stand in a bookstore on The Corner in Charlottesville, I saw an issue of *Dissent*. The cover trumpeted eminent Marxist historian Eugene Genovese's *mea culpa* for supporting Soviet crimes. Among the historians who had been asked to respond was Foner, who chided Genovese for his call for other abettors of Soviet genocide around the world to join him in expressing contrition.

To Foner's complaint that he was tired of hearing that he had not been anticommunist enough, Genovese responded that he knew perfectly well that Foner had never been anticommunist at all. Suddenly, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* made sense to me. Reconstruction, it seems, was just another manifestation of the same reform program of which Soviet dekulakization was representative—and the revolution will be unfinished until we have a forthrightly socialist regime in the United States. I have since learned that it is no secret that Foner was a red-diaper baby and remains unrepentant.

What does the historical profession think of this? Foner's book won the Pulitzer Prize, and its author has presided over the major historical association. If Dr. Jenkins is loath to believe such things of people who work on PBS projects, one can admire him for his Christian charity while gently helping him to apprehend reality.

—*Kevin R.C. Gutzman*
Bethel, CT

Dr. Jenkins Replies:

I do take Mr. Gutzman's point. The newsletters of the various professional societies regularly offer obituaries of aged historians who were, in their prime, "progressives," "radicals," or "dissenters." What this actually means is that Professor Smith was a slavishly loyal communist, resistant to any external evidence of Soviet crimes. I have no objection to such laments, provided that the authors would be equally forgiving of ex-Nazis or ex-Klansmen. Trust me, they aren't.

On the Culture War

I wish respectfully to raise a strong objection to Clyde Wilson's analysis of the culture war in his July *View*: "The culture war is not of our choosing. We did not seek it or declare it. We really only want-

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ed to be left alone to live by our patrimony in the normal human way."

This self-defeating desire to be "left alone" goes a long way in explaining why our heritage of European-derived Christian and classical civilization lies in virtual ruins. Invalids want to be left alone. Heroes rise to fight another day—striving out of an ineradicable sense of life's obligations and mutuality.

Western man's sickness may be, in part, the result of the loss of an aristocracy and the decline of heroic virtues of obligation and self-sacrifice. But that doesn't say enough. The heroic virtues perished at Appomattox—or Ilium—if not the Garden of Eden. But what meaning do they have now? What is the translation of the heroic virtues in a society such as we have today—the proletarianized unisex masscult?

The real failure of Western man is the failure to think through all of the forces assaulting him—the failure to be loyal to thinking for its own sake. It is, above all, a failure of imagination and feeling, but it has accelerated since the time of Descartes through reductionism in science, literalism in religion, and materialism and nihilism in philosophy. We need heroic thinkers to break these bonds asunder and set a new standard of the integration of intellect and soul.

Such a task is not one for people who just want to be "left alone."

—Caryl Johnston
Philadelphia, PA

Dr. Wilson Replies:

I agree that we certainly need leadership, and the fact that we lack it now is one of many signs of crisis. A healthy society lives without need for constant correction by the state. That is what I meant by "we only wanted to be let alone" to live in the normal way.

The crisis of our culture is in part caused and magnified by what I have elsewhere called the "Yankee Problem"—that strong streak in the American national character that refuses to leave other people alone and is unconscious of a distinction between society and government. Much of the deterioration of the American cultural fabric is the result of the knee-jerk impulse to employ government power to correct alleged imperfections in natural society—at home and abroad.

Instead of celebrating leaders who preserve and protect our society, we celebrate those who claim always to be busy using us to make ourselves and the world better. Bob Dole said his greatest accomplishment as senator was the Americans with Disabilities Act—*i.e.*, the federal takeover of every piece of land used for parking in the United States. President Bush tells us he will use our blood and treasure to foment democratic revolution throughout the universe. The state is at this moment telling the culture that it must respect sodomy. Civilized people, in such a regime, prefer to be left alone.

On Women in Combat

I would like to add another fact in support of R. Cort Kirkwood's article "The New Reality" (*American Proscenium*, July).

From 1980 to 1986, I served in Military Sealift Command (civilian-crewed support vessels for the U.S. Navy). From January to May 1982, I was enrolled in a class to upgrade to Able-Body Seaman. One of the requirements for passing the course was the bending of a line around a bosun's chair, reeving the line through an overhead pulley, and then lifting oneself up to the pulley. All the men participating passed the test.

There was one woman in the course. She was pretty, and she was book smart. However, she could not pass the test. The teacher, a licensed master-seaman, gave her three chances to pull herself up. She never got her feet off the ground. We were surprised when he rhetorically asked the rest of the class, "She did a good job, didn't she?" Then, he passed her.

Now, that girl would become a headache to the bosun of her next ship and all the ships thereafter, because, when it came time to chip paint on the mainmast or to go over the side and paint, he would have to call in another seaman to do the job in her place. She did not have the strength a man has by nature. I know I did not want to serve with her, because she could not carry her load.

I could only figure that the teacher was under the gun to get more women at sea. It was political, but not practical. Mr. Kirkwood aptly labeled the age "The New Reality," and it is a bizarre one.

—Jerry C. Meng
Imlay City, MI

Cort Kirkwood's article mentions the "mishap" of Navy Lt. Kara Hultgreen when she tried to land an F-14 on the deck of the carrier U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln* in 1999. Subsequent to the crash, her mother, Sally Spears, wrote and published her biography (*Call Sign Revlon: The Life and Death of Navy Fighter Pilot Kara Hultgreen*). Without realizing it, her mother made the case that the young woman should never have been carrier qualified because of numerous relatively minor mishaps that Lieutenant Hultgreen always blamed on someone else. How did she get qualified? Her mother described in great detail her own political connections within the Clinton administration's Navy Department and her success in getting her daughter accepted for F-14 training and qualification. In other words, Spears was unintentionally instrumental in her daughter's death.

—Robert C. Whitten
Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve—Ret.
Cupertino, CA

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by Srdja Trifkovic

The Destruction of Lebanon

Much of the Western commentary on the violence in Lebanon has not been about the events themselves but about the commentators' feelings about the warring parties. Israel's staunch friends and apologists would not admit that the IDF has done anything wrong, or that it could do anything wrong, even if the whole of southern Lebanon were turned into a sandbox, and Beirut, into a replica of Dresden. On the other hand, those who dislike Israel have gleefully grabbed the opportunity to vent their feelings under the cover of righteous indignation. In both cases, a multifaceted story with far-reaching geopolitical implications has been reduced to a crude morality play whose lessons are essentially unrelated to the reality on the ground.

That reality is complex but not inscrutable. Lebanon is being destroyed for the second time in three decades, and her ordeal was triggered by external forces acting in pursuit of interests that are different from those of most Lebanese citizens.

In the 1970's, the Palestine Liberation Organization came to Beirut after being expelled from Amman. It quickly shattered the precarious balance between Christians, Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze and caused a civil war that eventually involved Syria, Israel, and various international peacekeepers. The war soon acquired religious undertones and caused an exodus of Lebanon's Christians, who have declined from a simple majority before 1975 to perhaps one third of the country's population today.

After a halting recovery, it appeared that Lebanon was capable of becoming, once again, the commercial, financial, and entertainment center of the Middle East. Downtown Beirut had regained its old charm, while new office towers appeared on its skyline. The remaining Syrian troops departed in early 2005, and the tourists came back. Thousands of expatriates also returned from Western Europe and the Americas, bringing with them many skills essential to a "New Middle East."

Once again, however, outside forces were determined to use Lebanon as the object of their geopolitical designs. The second round of Lebanon's destruction began on July 12, when Hezbollah, a Shiite militia inspired, trained, and financed by Iran, staged a series of sudden cross-border attacks on Israeli soldiers, killing eight and abducting two. In the days that followed, hundreds of Hezbollah rockets were launched against population centers deep inside Israel, including the predominantly Arab city of Nazareth.

For over two decades, the "Party of Allah" has been a state within the Lebanese state. Its stated objective is to fight Israel, which has enabled Hezbollah to gain support in the Arab street even among the Sunnis, who are usually distrustful of the "heretical" Islamic sect. Nevertheless, the group's underlying geopolitical agenda reflects Iran's interests. In the long term, Tehran seeks to create a transnational Shiite domain that will extend from Iran across the Fertile Crescent and all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. Iran's short-term interest in igniting Lebanon was to deflect attention from her own nuclear program that had, in the weeks preceding the flare up, caused even the forbearing Europeans to lose patience and start talking of a concerted international action against Tehran.

The Israeli military's response was immediate, indiscriminate, and, on the whole, ineffective. In military terms, its massive air strikes that killed hundreds of civilians and degraded Lebanon's infrastructure were unable to cripple Hezbollah's military capability or to disrupt its command-and-control structure. By early August, it became apparent that only a large-scale deployment by Israel's ground forces could possibly accomplish that. On the other hand, for the IDF to return to Lebanon after six years would represent an admission of failure to manage the turf from a distance. It could also draw Israeli troops into a trap that would provide the focal point for every devout jihadist and Arab nationalist in the world. Israel can ill afford a new imbroglio so long as Gaza remains volatile, the West Bank restive, and Hamas ready to strike again along the long and winding Green Line.

In political terms, the Israeli response was disastrous. It turned even the Christians, who were anything but Hezbollah's natural allies, against Israel. Such uniform hostility was in sharp contrast with the late 1970's and early 80's, when the Israelis were able to create tactical alliances with various Lebanese factions and a long-term partnership with the Christian leader in the south, the late Major Haddad. The indiscriminate nature of Israel's response has reduced the scope for such political creativity. The scenes of civilian suffering, such as the ghastly footage of the aftermath of the air raid on Qana on July 30, circumscribed Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's maneuvering space to the point where his forces need to regard every Lebanese villager as hostile and potentially dangerous. With a more nuanced response, Israel could have sent the message to Lebanon's non-Shiites that those who were to blame for the violence were the ones who were getting punished most severely. Once the bombs started falling on everyone equally, Israel turned every segment of Lebanese opinion against her.

A political solution is possible even at this unpromising stage, but it will require the development of a new Syrian policy in Washington. Syria is not interested in Iran's geopolitical designs, but she is interested in gaining Western approval, in general, and the recognition of the legitimacy of her current regime by Washington, in particular. The current alliance between Syria and Hezbollah makes strategic sense as long as the United States treats Syria as part of the "Axis of Evil"; but Bashir Assad can be divorced from Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and his mentors in Tehran. Unlike the latter, Assad is not an Islamic fundamentalist, and he might be willing to consider a reasonable offer comparable to the one made to Libya's Colonel Qaddafi in 2003: Stop creating mischief, and we'll let you reign in peace.

The Middle East still offers the United States a considerable scope for creative action. The first task is to reject any immutable "givens" and to recall that, in that volatile region, America has permanent interests—stability, fighting Islamic terrorism, securing energy supplies—and no permanent attachments. Her friendships, as well as her animosities, should be dependent on any given actor's impact on those interests.

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THE NEOCONSERVATIVE dream of spreading "democracy" in the Middle East, a delusion wholeheartedly embraced by President George W. Bush, is rapidly becoming a nightmare. Pursuit of this utopian vision has already strengthened the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, propelled Hezbollah into the Lebanese government, and brought Hamas to power in the Palestinian Authority. In Iraq, it has produced a Shiite government friendly to Iran and has emboldened Islamic terrorists, whose violence has created an exodus of Iraqi Christians, exactly as Wayne Allensworth predicted in these pages before the first American soldier entered Iraq. Recently, *New York Times* Baghdad-bureau chief John Burns painted a vivid picture of the violent anarchy that has engulfed Iraq, describing to NPR's Terry Gross a situation in which 2,000 bodies end up in Baghdad's morgue each month; lawless and unscrupulous men are everywhere seizing power; life is marked by shootings, bombings, and kidnappings; and the police entrusted with keeping order often resort to torture and summary executions. And, as of this writing, 2,567 American servicemen have died in Iraq.

The neoconservatives who helped create this mess are unrepentant. Indeed, according to a July 19 article by Michael Abramowitz in the *Washington Post* ("Conservative Anger Grows Over Bush's Foreign Policy"), they have turned on President Bush, because, preoccupied with Iraq, he has thus far failed to follow their advice about forcibly exporting "democracy" to Iran, Syria, North Korea, and Russia. According to Abramowitz, Newt Gingrich is denouncing Bush's "appeasement" of North Korea and Iran, Kenneth Adelman believes that "foreign policy innovation for [the] White House ended with Bush's second inaugural address," and Danielle Pletka of the American Enterprise Institute doesn't have "a friend in the administration, on Capitol Hill, or any part of the foreign policy establishment who is not beside themselves [*sic*] with fury at the administration."

Notwithstanding the fury of Miss Pletka and her friends, Abramowitz concedes that things may no longer be going their way: "It has not helped the neoconservative case, perhaps, that the occupation of Iraq has not gone as smoothly as some had predicted." Abramowitz's understatement is appropriate, since politicians and pundits aren't often swayed by reality. But Abramowitz presents evidence that some are, indeed, beginning to see the light.

Exhibit A is George Will, who, in his July 18 column, criticized "a spectacularly misnamed radicalism, 'neoconservatism,'" and described the *Weekly Standard*'s most recent criticism of President Bush for not yet waging war on Iran as being "so untethered from reality as to defy caricature."

Exhibit B is William F. Buckley, Jr., who told CBS News on July 22 that "There will be no legacy for Mr. Bush" and that "If you had a European prime minister who experienced what we've experienced [in Iraq] it would be expected that he would retire or resign." Buckley also told CBS that "Bush faces a singular problem best defined . . . as the absence of effective conservative ideology."

Better late than never, I suppose. But long before Will and Buckley came to the apparent realization that neoconservatives are not conservatives at all, such men as Pat Buchanan, Sam Francis, and Tom Fleming were warning that neoconservatism was just another form of leftism with origins that were social democratic, at best, and Trotskyist, at worst. Buckley and Will were too busy ingratiating themselves to the neocons and penning or publishing denunciations of those who criticized the rush to war to take heed. Before the Iraq war, *Chronicles* and Buchanan again warned that the neoconservatives' adventure in the Middle East did not bode well for America and the West. Buckley's response was to allow David Frum to denounce as "unpatriotic conservatives" Buchanan, Francis, and Fleming, in a cover article for *National Review*.

One hopes that Will and Buckley continue to criticize the neocons, and that these criticisms help dissuade Americans from embarking on more misguided adventures to build "democracy." But it would also be appropriate for Will and Buckley to consider, and even acknowledge, that their own mistakes helped this form of leftism take hold on the American right.

—*Tom Piatak*

THE EUROPEAN UNION will set up rapid-reaction teams to deal with an increasing flood of illegal African immigrants on Europe's southern flank. The decision was made by the European Commission at a July 19 meeting spurred on by complaints from Spain, Italy, and Malta. Illegal immigration to Spain *via* the Canary Islands has increased sharply this year: According to media accounts, 11,000 African illegals made their way to the Canary Islands off the northwest coast of Africa in the first half of 2006, more than doubling last year's number. The European Union also proposes to strengthen Europe's external borders, coordinate repatriation policies with member states, and impose stiffer fines on employers hiring illegal immigrants.

While Spain and Italy have both been under pressure from increasing illegal immigration, tiny Malta brought the issue to a head by refusing to admit 51 Africans picked up by a Spanish fishing trawler in the Mediterranean. The Maltese government argued that the trawler was closer to the coast of Libya than Malta when the Africans were picked up. Spain asked Brussels to intervene. (The standoff was settled when several E.U. countries agreed to divide up the illegal immigrants among them—and Malta did receive a share.) In the meantime, the European Union has pledged to set up patrols in the Mediterranean off Malta's coast.

Malta received 18 boatloads of Africans in June alone, and Maltese officials have complained that the island country had been abandoned by the European Union. With 400,000 inhabitants, Malta is the second-most densely populated country in the world (after Bangladesh), and her people have not been shy about voicing their dismay over being flooded with illegal African immigrants. "We don't want a multicultural society," said Martin Degiorgio, a leader of a Maltese anti-immigration group. "Haven't you seen the problems it has brought to France and Britain?"

While pledging to strengthen borders and take other measures to increase immigration controls, E.U. officials have also trotted out another program that may sound familiar to Americans: At a recent conference held in Morocco of 57 African and European states, the Europeans pledged to fund programs aimed at

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improving economic conditions in Africa—in the hope that the Africans will stay home. But remaking a dysfunctional collection of corrupt states torn apart by tribal and religious conflict into Equatorial Europe seems more than a little unlikely. At best, the program will probably amount to an attempt to bribe leaders of gangster states to force their populations to stay put—and just how often have most of the leaders of said states ever performed any official function approaching a level one might call "competent"? At worst, such programs will provide more cover for a globalist, open-borders elite that seems hell-bent on destroying what remains of Western civilization.

Even assuming that a massive aid program could somehow do for the Africans what they have not been able to do for themselves, just how long would it be before living standards reached a high enough level to remove incentives for emigration? Apart from that, here are a few points to ponder: There are 900 million people living in Africa, with more than 200 million of them located in North Africa, just a short boat ride away from Europe. Fifty percent of Africa's population is under 17 years of age, with limited education and few skills. By 2050, there could be as many as two billion Africans. What does any reasonable person think those people will do? As it stands, millions of them are apparently ready to risk life and limb to break into Europe uninvited.

If Europe will not defend itself, then the happy talk about foreign aid (a sample from French President Jacques Chirac: "Let us offer Africa's youth a future of dignity. Then it will not risk resorting to violence and extremism, or choosing, en masse, the path of exile") is all Europeans have to bank on—and the measures the European Union is considering are small-scale. The rapid-response teams that are supposed to defend Europe's southern flank will be made up of a ridiculously small 250 to 300 people!

British Rear Adm. Chris Parry, a senior Ministry of Defence strategist, has warned that Europe faces a challenge on par with the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire. As borders collapse, the European states will lose control over their own territories. The mass population migration now under way could make swelling metropolitan areas ungovernable.

That scenario is likely, given that the European Union could not even bring itself to repatriate the 51 Africans Malta refused to accept. Jean Raspail's *Camp of the Saints* is being played out before our eyes.

—*Wayne Allensworth*

REPUBLICANS, including President George W. Bush, may have some explaining to do if the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down the Defense of Marriage Act.

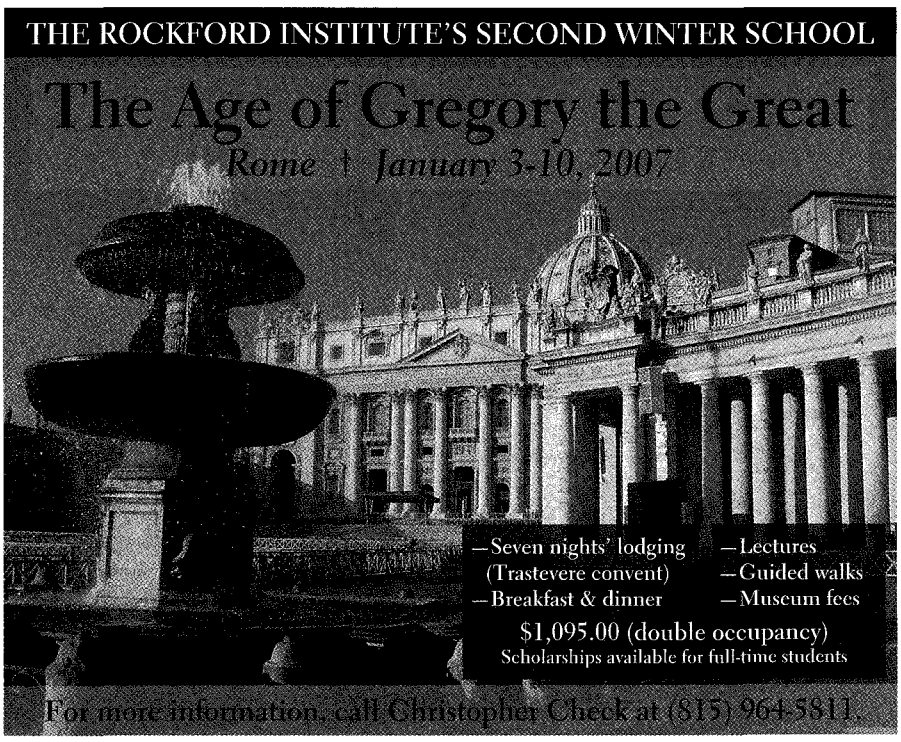
Suppose a lot of people were counting on you to accomplish something and there were two ways—one hard and one easy—to do it. Which would you choose? If you picked the hard way, and then failed, how would you explain that to the people counting on you?

"Gay-marriage" cases are now wending their way up to the Supreme Court. There are two ways to stop them. The hard way is by constitutional amendment, which requires a two-thirds vote of both the Senate and the House. On July 18, the Marriage Protection Amendment failed in the House 236-187, 47 votes short. The amendment, even had it passed the House, was going nowhere since it had already failed in the Senate, garnering only 49 votes—out of a needed 67—on a procedural vote in May. So, in this case, the Amendment Route is worse than hard: It's impossible.

In contrast, the House demonstrated the easy way when, the very day after the Marriage Protection Amendment failed, it passed a statute removing cases involving the Pledge of Allegiance from the U.S. Supreme Court's docket by a 260-167 vote. The easy way is the Statutory Route—a simple statute limiting what cases the Supreme Court can hear. The House, in 2004, passed H.R. 3313 by a vote of 233-192, which used the Statutory Route to remove "gay marriage" cases from the Court's docket. H.R. 3313 ultimately failed, however, because the Bush administration made no effort to get the bill through the Senate. The 2004 Republican platform, however, promised to try again if the President was reelected. Why doesn't he reintroduce H.R. 3313, pass it in the House again, and try to get it through the Senate? One third of the Senate is up for reelection in November, so why not try?

For many years, Republicans said the Democrats did not want to solve the welfare problem because it was such a good campaign issue for them. Well, if we solved the homosexual-marriage and activist-judge problems, the Republicans would lose their two premier campaign issues—issues that may have won the 2004 election for them.

But there is no doubt that the problem can easily be solved by the Statutory Route. Most Americans view the Court as the ultimate arbiter of constitutional questions, but the Constitution does not assign that role to the Supreme Court. As Chief Justice John Roberts said at his nomination hearings, "The people who framed our Constitution were jealous of their freedom and liberty. They would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not have sat around and said 'Let's take all the hard issues and give them over to the judges.' That would have been the furthest thing from their minds." The Court's authority to interpret the Constitution derives from its obligation to decide cases. The Chief Justice testified: "The obligation to decide cases is the only basis for the authority to interpret the Constitution." He wrote, while working for the Department of Justice in 1982, that, "If the necessity of interpreting the Constitution is removed, as it would be if the Court were divested of jurisdiction, the basis for the Court's role as final interpreter of the Constitution is removed." Congress, under Article III of the Constitution, is in charge of deciding what cases the Court may hear.

The necessity for a bill such as H.R. 3313 depends on how you think the Supreme Court will rule on the validity of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act. If the Court upholds it, the states will retain control over the definition of a marriage. But if the Court strikes it down, the states will be overruled, and a Massachusetts "gay marriage" will have to be recognized by Ohio. No one, of course, knows which way the Court will rule. But many believe that—in view of its decision in *Lawrence* v. *Texas*, which found a constitutional right to sodomize—the Court will rule, under the Constitution's Full Faith and Credit Clause, that Ohio must recognize a Massachusetts gay marriage.

The House votes on July 18 and 19 were part of the Republican Values Agenda, which is intended to show the party's concern for traditional values. In fact, the votes demonstrated a deep cynicism. The failure of the Amendment Route, followed by the success of the Statutory Route the very next day, shows that any serious person would use the latter. The Republican Party is free to prefer a campaign issue to a viable solution, but they have to hope that their constituents are too blind to see what they are doing. If they do open their eyes, they will be very angry.

—*William J. Quirk*

PRESIDENT BUSH, in the words of FAUX News man Stephen Colbert, "lost his veto virginity" on July 19, five-and-a-half years into his administration. What issue was important enough for him to break his apparent vow of legislative chastity? A congressional appropriation, passed overwhelmingly by both the Senate and the House, that would have provided taxpayer funding for, in the words of Catholic World News, "stem-cell research using 'leftover' embryos from fertility clinics."

As White House Press Secretary Tony Snow proclaimed, "The president is not going to get on the slippery slope of taking something living and making it dead for the purposes of scientific research." (The President apparently does reserve the right to take something living and make it dead for the purposes of exporting democracy to Iraq.)

The veto capped a frenzied week of congressional activity (part of which has been chronicled above by Bill Quirk) that had more to do with establishing legislative records for incumbents to run on in November than it did with any question of principle. And, while this veto was welcome, its role as part of the Republican Values Agenda does call into question President Bush's true reason for acting as he did.

As my sister Monica, a research scientist in cell and molecular biology, and I pointed out in the June 2003 issue of *Chronicles* ("Stemming the Tide," *Chronicles Intelligence Assessment*), the commitment of President Bush and his administration on this issue has always been suspect. Would he have vetoed this legislation if it had come up in 2005? More importantly, will he veto it if it comes up again in 2007?

Snow, responding to a question about whether President Bush is worried that the veto will hurt Republicans in November, does not give us any particular reason to hope: "[I]t's worth pointing out one thing—actually several things on stem cells. Number one, the President is the first ever to have financed research using embryonic stem cell lines." And: "I think a President acting on conscience—a President who, again—Bill Clinton, as President, didn't authorize any of these lines. This is a President who's spent more money on embryonic stem cell research and stem cell research generally than any President in American history. He's got the track record. What's happening now is that people are trying to politicize it by accusing him of standing in the way of science, when he's the guy who's made it possible to open up the way to science."

To open up the way to science—that would explain why President Bush had offered support to S. 2754, the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act, sponsored by Pennsylvania senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum. While Senator Santorum claimed that S. 2754 would fund adult stem-cell research, that was less than a half-truth: If S. 2754 had passed, the federal government would have funded a procedure that would take a nucleus from an adult cell and place it in an unfertilized egg that has had its nucleus removed.

As American Life League President Judie Brown correctly pointed out, this process does not create adult stem-cell lines; it creates embryos through a form of cloning. Those embryos would then have been destroyed to create embryonic stem-cell lines that would have been eligible for federal research funding, just like the 60-plus embryonic stem-cell lines that President Bush approved for federal funding back in August 2001.

That would have gone a step beyond "taking something living and making it dead for the purposes of scientific research": It would have been *making* "something living and making it dead for the purposes of scientific research."

And yet, one day after S. 2754 passed the Senate *unanimously* but its companion bill failed in the House, every conservative Christian pro-life organization in America—including those who did not support President Bush's August 2001 decision or S. 2754—applauded the President for his "bravery" for finally exercising his veto power. How quickly we forget.

—*Scott P. Richert*

OBITER DICTA: Our poet this month is **Timothy Murphy**, who hails from Fargo, North Dakota. His collections of poetry include *The Deed of Gift* (Story Line Press) and *Very Far North* (Between the Lines). Over 30 of his poems have been published in the pages of *Chronicles*.

Our cover art is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George currently resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and his son, William.

Our interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

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by Thomas Fleming

Let's Call the Whole Thing Off

Faculty parties are excruciating experiences—bad food and worse conversation. It has been many decades since American professors were scholars or scientists who could take an intelligent interest in a wide range of subjects, but they doggedly persist in repeating the opinions they have picked up like so much lint.

Younger professors are perhaps the worst offenders. Many of them would rather talk sports or retell what they watched on television the night before, but they often feel compelled to talk for effect, which is really the last thing in the world they will ever be able to do. I remember bits of an informal party given by my professor, Douglas Young, to honor a visiting French Hellenist. Graduate students and younger faculty members, giving vent to their deepest feelings, were analyzing an episode of *Mannix*, when Young, quite exasperated, blurted out, "Speaking of Aeschylus . . . " To which the department's future chairman responded, "But Douglas, we weren't speaking of Aeschylus."

"Yes, but I want to be speaking of Aeschylus."

Off to a bad start, the conversation turned to more serious questions, stranding the *Mannix*-watchers almost in midsentence. In the course of the discussion, Young expressed forceful opinions on subjects as varied as Greek lyric meters and the dissolution of the Labour Party. After an hour of this, the same future chairman, as thoroughgoing an anti-intellectual as has ever pined for a deanship, grew even more resentful, observing somewhat caustically, "There isn't a subject on which Douglas doesn't have an opinion." To which Young replied that there were vast areas of human learning on which he did not know enough to have, much less express, an opinion.

What the future chairman could not understand was the distinction between a carefully formed view on a subject that has been seriously studied—what we otherwise might call an argument or a position or an idea—and an opinion arbitrarily adopted for entirely personal or trivial reasons. Although the word *opinion* is used for both, we should be able, even in the simplest things, to distinguish between a well-considered conclusion and a mere whim. For example, I dislike most mayonnaise on the excellent grounds that I can distinguish between commercial mayonnaise and the real thing my wife occasionally makes; on the other hand, I also picked up my dislike from my father, who—since he also disliked mustard and ketchup—may simply have been prejudiced against all condiments.

Now, there is nothing wrong with prejudices. They are the indispensable simplifiers by which we live and die. A man does not have to understand why he dislikes Pepsi-Cola or Prussians or free verse. He just does. If, however, he feels he must convince someone else of the validity of his prejudice, he soon finds himself turning into an opinionmonger, like one of those poor devils paid to recite party propaganda on the television. These days, they seem to come in pairs, like Hannity and Colmes or Paul Begala and Tucker Carlson. I'm tempted to invoke Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, but neither side of these pairs is as passionate as Henry Jekyll or as erudite as Mr. Hyde.

Where do television performers get the idea that they are entitled to have opinions on, say, foreign policy or business? The problem is not their manifest lack of critical intelligence. A man might be as dull-witted as a Charlie Gibson, former *Good Morning America* chatterbox and now the star of ABC's *World News With Charles Gibson*, but, after a few terms covering Congress, he has earned his right to lie about politics. But getting inside dope on politics from commentators who have never managed a campaign or run for office is a bit like listening to music reviews written by a tone-deaf critic.

I should not be astonished, though I am too frequently, by the studied ignorance that pervades every serious debate in American life. Every night on television, professional Christians, ignorant of biology, philosophy, archaeology, history, and theology, pretend to debunk the theory of evolution—a theory they consistently misrepresent—while their enemies, the public Darwinists (from the days of Thomas Henry Huxley to more recent experts such as Carl Sagan, Stephen Jay Gould, and Richard Dawkins) think they have answered all the great riddles of existence, when, in fact, they do not know what the questions are, much less how to go about searching for answers.

Greed and cynicism may explain the opinions propounded by the self-proclaimed experts who caricature biology and archaeology on TBN, but scientists also lie (in the objective sense) when they pronounce on such subjects as the origin of life, global warming, or stem-cell research. An objective lie, at least as I use the expression, is not merely a lapse in knowledge but either a mistaken judgment for which there is no excuse or else an ill-considered opinion that is offered up as an expert conclusion. This, I take to be something like what Dr. Johnson meant whenever he said, "Sir, you lie." We all lie in this sense, pretending to knowledge or expertise we do not possess, but, since hardly anybody takes our opinions seriously, it rarely matters. But, suppose I am an accredited expert on Greek philosophy (*e.g.*, Martha Nussbaum), and suppose I should give misleading testimony, under oath, as to the meaning of a Greek word used by Plato. Dr. Johnson would then be justified in uttering his more severe judgment, "Sir, you lie, and you know you lie," because, in such a case, I have misrepresented either the facts or my own expertise.

The political opinions expressed by scientific experts often fall somewhere between these two hypothetical cases. As experts on evolutionary theory, they testify on the morality of abortion or the use of fetal stem cells just as, on the other side, physicists assume the mantle of science in order to make pronouncements on biology, a field as alien to them as Egyptology. Mankind has never been very fond of truth, but there was a time when a common culture made it more difficult for historians and zoologists to horn-

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swoggle each other. The historian might not have read the latest from Lamarck, the zoologist might be ignorant of Gibbon, but both had read Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides. With what pleasure do we run across such hybrid geniuses as D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson. As a biologist—and mathematician—he wrote the still classic *Growth and Form*, but as the recipient of a classical education, he was the acknowledged expert on ancient birds and trees. Was he a superman or merely a Scot? Thompson died in 1948, by which time the last generation of such men was already in school. My own generation long ago showed that they can accomplish nothing, and the younger men are far worse than we were, and, yes, the world of letters has been in steady decline for centuries.

Early specialization has eliminated the common culture that could produce a D'Arcy Thompson, and we are left with an intellectual life dominated by trained savages who can do their job, understand (perhaps) some little corner of the universe (in the case of cosmologists, that corner is very tiny, indeed), but cannot integrate what they have learned into a larger picture. When popular scientists step outside their field, they either fall back on the platitudes of the Durants or, what is worse, rely on whatever theoretical approach has been recommended by their colleagues in other departments. Carl Sagan was, perhaps, the most extreme example, passing sweeping judgments on Christianity while lifting his opinions—and, in at least one case, an entire passage—wholesale from popular encyclopedias. But Sagan was not even the worst of a bad lot, a position I reserve for Julian Jaynes, author of *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, a work that should be set on the shelf between *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

No, Carl Sagan and Julian Jaynes were not entitled to their opinions on history or theology, any more than Bill Moyers or Ken Burns is entitled to an opinion on anything. But where would pollsters be if just any unreflective jackass did not feel entitled to vent his opinions, whether on the French Revolution or on nude sunbathing?

As Americans, we all have a right to our opinion on anything that swims into our murky awareness. Informed or not, interested or not, we insist on having our little preferences. The important thing is never to be without a ready-made opinion or we might, for one instant, glimpse some banal bit of reality and find it terrifying.

Disagreements over trifles have broken friendships and ruined marriages. "You say tomato, I say tom*ah*to." To save the "relationship," either Fred or Ginger will have to give way, but, though it is true that we grow up speaking different dialects, it should not be impossible, even in principle, to say that one pronunciation is preferable to another, or that one should not put grated parmigiano on a seafood pasta or wear a striped tie with a checkered shirt or brown shoes in the evening. I do not say that each of these judgments is infallible, only that it is not impossible that any one (and only one) of them is correct.

But "error of opinion may be tolerated where truth is left free to combat it."

Perhaps in Mr. Jefferson's world, but not in ours. If a young man in Des Moines puts cheese on his *bucatini con sugo di cozze* or an ill-educated New Yorker regards Norman Mailer as a great writer, what chance of improvement does either have, if he cannot concede the possibility that he is wrong? Millions of Christians have fallen for heresies as plausible as Arianism and as implausible as Calvin's theory of predestination, but, in this case, at least, the heretics do not claim they have a right to their opinion but that they are right. Thomas Hobbes, to this extent, was correct: "They that approve a private opinion, call it opinion; but they that mislike it, heresy: and yet heresy signifies no more than private opinion."

Why do people insist on having opinions about things they do not care enough to study? I meet Straussians who want to argue about Plato or the career of Abraham Lincoln but refuse to learn Greek (I do not mean take a few courses) or consider the content of Lincoln's speeches and letters. Straussians are, admittedly, dedicated to the proposition that all men were created equally idiotic, but they are hardly unique. A few years ago, I was having dinner with a group of intelligent post-Marxists, and, in talking about the historiography of ancient Greece, one of them opined that Christian Meier was wrong about Thucydides. Now, there are many things in Meier's work with which I disagree quite strongly, but it was simply absurd for a Greekless political theorist to have, much less express, an opinion on a great historian. He was shocked by my arrogance and appealed to an expert on German literature: "Surely, I don't have to know German to have an opinion about Goethe, do I?"

This was not the question, I explained, because one could get a decent idea of Goethe's greatness as a thinker by reading him in translation. A better parallel would be a judgment on Goethe as a poet. The political theorist agreed to the restatement of the question and was again shocked to hear his friend, the German expert, agree entirely that no one could judge Goethe's poetry who had not read him in German.

Modern man sometimes seems like nothing more than a grab bag of accidentally acquired opinions. Nearly 20 years ago, in a *Chronicles* article, Stephen R.L. Clark described the opinionated mentality as embodied in the statement,

> I'm the sort of person who supports Everton rather than Liverpool, pretends to adore the Queen Mother and dislike Princess Anne, thinks that Qaddafi is insane and Gorbachev is a nicer chap than Brezhnev, and votes for Mrs. Tiggywinkle while expressing cautious disapproval of her policies.

NPR devotes hours of airtime, every week, to personal essays by freelance "writers." One series, *This I Believe*, is based explicitly on the premise that all opinions are created equal. The internet has only aggravated this fake populism, giving every man a blog to fill with inanities.

Was it always like this? Plato complains, repeatedly, about people who trust *doxa*—that is, those who know nothing but what seems good. But Plato was being harsh. The ordinary Athenians he lampooned believed what their parents and friends had taught them about courage and piety. If traditional Athenian attitudes fell short of perfect truth, at least they did not, as so much Platonic teaching appears to do, make it difficult for ordinary people to lead moral lives. We cannot all be philosophers or scholars or evolutionary biologists.

It is dangerous to put much trust in our opinions. What difference does it make if I am right about the proper age for a child's First Communion or the correct form of Baptism? I am better off if I let my church tell me what to do, and, if I persist in having an opinion, then the least I can do is to enter the priesthood or, if I lack the courage, become a professor of some relevant discipline. What good do opinions do us once we are dead? None,

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and, if they have made us uncharitable, a good deal of harm.

Whether we like it or not, most, perhaps all, of what we believe has been given to us by someone—by parents, teachers, or the authors of some cheap book we found abandoned in an airplane seat-pocket. If we are lucky enough to have been born into a wholesome (even if imperfect) tradition, we can lead good lives without thinking too much. Plato was wrong: The unexamined life must be worth living. Otherwise, most lives are utterly worthless. If we have been born into a bad tradition and are fortunate enough to see some of the errors, the greatest mistake is to conclude that we now ought to be thinking for ourselves. If Islam or liberalism is wrong, it is only because something else is right—namely, the Christian tradition—and it is small credit to us if the truth has made its way, against all odds, into our stubborn and fitful intelligence.

Too often, however, we think we are wiser than the tradition that has made us. Exasperated with a few bad priests or ministers, we immediately conclude that Christianity or our church is bunk and that we are brilliant enough to see through the sham. All too often, a conversion is nothing better than the realization that the Catholic or Orthodox or Lutheran Church is entirely invalid, compared with the Fourway Church of the Sacred Wheel, whose truth we and a few others have been smart enough to recognize as the one true church. There is too much self-satisfaction in converts of every type. They not only condemn the church of their parents to everlasting fire but, in the case of Protestant converts to Catholicism and Orthodoxy, often insist upon the most rigorous standards for a church whose traditions they hardly understand.

If we once discard the liberal illusion that our opinions mean something, we can subject ourselves to the disciplining reality of everyday experience and to the formative reality of the traditions that make us who we are and point us in a direction of who we ought to be. Naturally, that is just my opinion. ◈

Riderless Horses

by Timothy Murphy

"Why do we mourn? He lived to eight-two!"
Soc Glasrud said, tears coursing down his face,
a weathered headland where the decades drew
furrows that death will all too soon erase.

My father's youthful face was disarranged
when a rogue draft horse kicked him in the head.
By words, not blows, we later were estranged
but I forgive a man now four years dead

whose last confession was "I've been too dark,"
whose final, whispered insight was "Vince wins."
Lord, may his knack for words that hit the mark
win him remission of his venial sins.

And when I bear Soc Glasrud to his hearse?
More boots to fill or stirrup in reverse.

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by Joseph Sobran

Holmes & Sons

During a recent bout of infirmity, I turned for solace to the greatest storyteller of modern times, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930). If this sounds like excessive praise, I ask you—no, I defy you—to name his superior, or even his nearest rival, for that title.

Late in the Victorian era, Conan Doyle, a struggling physician, tried his hand at fiction. He wrote a novella, *A Study in Scarlet*, featuring an eccentrically brilliant detective, narrated by the admiring doctor who shares rooms with him in London. Sherlock Holmes was modeled on one of Conan Doyle's teachers in medical school, a Dr. Joseph Bell, who'd had a knack for making startling deductions from tiny physical details of his patients' appearance.

The book, first published in a London magazine in 1887, was not a great success. But two years later, its sequel, *The Sign of Four*, proved the most sensationally popular piece of fiction since Dickens, and Holmes' further adventures only increased the reading public's ravenous appetite for him, which has never abated.

Even today, needless to say, Holmes has countless admirers, many of them obsessive. He has had, and still has, a life of his own—in innumerable novels, movies, television productions, and, of course, imitators. He has spawned the enormous genre of detective fiction, in spite of critical neglect and even contempt.

Conan Doyle himself, distressed that Holmes overshadowed his other fiction, tried to finish him off in "The Final Problem" in 1893, leaving him apparently dead. The public was outraged. But popular demand led the author to write a "posthumous" Holmes novel, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and then to resume the stories on the pretext that Holmes wasn't dead after all.

Plausible? Of course not. But none of the stories are. Holmes' deductions are so outlandish that only Watson could recount them with a straight face. Conan Doyle's sly humor always peaks when the detective sums up a package of impossibly *outré* "clues" and demands, "Well, Watson, what do you make of it?" Watson's infallibly befuddled attempts to explain them—the word "clueless" springs anachronistically to mind—bring both the mystery and the comedy to a head.

Watson himself, though, is the indispensable plot device, the baffled sidekick who serves as foil to Holmes' brilliance. The real point of the story is not to solve a crime but to display a fascinating personality, as Holmes suggests when he affectionately calls Watson "my Boswell." Later detective fiction would likewise revolve around the sleuth's masterly personality—Lord Peter Wimsey, Hercule Poirot, Nero Wolfe, and so on—until a reaction, chiefly American, set in.

As Raymond Chandler put it in *The Simple Art of Murder*, Dashiell Hammett "took murder out of the conservatory and put it in the alley, where it belongs." The hard-boiled American dick, talking like Hemingway, supplanted the genteel, polished British sleuth, and the sidekick was usually dispensed with, as were adverbs and subordinate clauses. Chandler's contempt for Holmes was explicit: The plots were absurd, and they owed their appeal chiefly to "a few lines of unforgettable dialogue."

This was a little rough. Even Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe were finally Holmes' progeny, though their creators tried to disguise their debt to Conan Doyle, as resentful disciples will. Holmes confronts crimes fully as brutal and horrifying, some involving mutilation, as those the cynical Yanks have to deal with.

As for plotting, Conan Doyle has few masters. Three of the four long tales—*A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, and my own favorite of the whole canon, *The Valley of Fear* (1915)—feature lengthy narrative digressions explaining the background of the crime Holmes has solved. Even without the detective interest (we forget Holmes while we read them), these are thrilling, moving, and altogether satisfying. They show that their author might have achieved fame and fortune even without one of the most magnetic characters ever conceived.

Another of Holmes' literary descendants is less often noted. Holmes and Watson are hilariously parodied in the relation between P.G. Wodehouse's hyperbrainy valet Jeeves and Jeeves' obtuse "master," Bertie Wooster. Surely, the parallel is intentional: The flustered Bertie depends entirely on the self-possessed servant to rescue him from his constant scrapes; and Bertie's hero-worship of Jeeves exceeds even Watson's admiration for the detective, though Jeeves, unlike Holmes, is always deferential. Yet all the comedy is implicit in Conan Doyle.

The Holmes stories appeared over a 40-year span, ending in 1927. The later ones are so inferior to the early ones that some Holmes scholars believe Conan Doyle allowed others to write a few, or at least parts, of them. (See W.W. Robson's introduction to the Oxford World's Classics edition of *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*.) After all, he had been ready to retire Holmes less than a decade after producing him.

His weariness is clear in "The Creeping Man" (1923), one of the funniest but least believable of all the stories. An aging professor has been wooing a young woman, has been found crawling on all fours in the dead of night, has made a mysterious trip to Prague, and has been attacked by his own dog. "What do you think of it, Watson?" Watson surmises that the old man, deranged by love, has lumbago, went to Prague to forget the love affair, and has had to borrow money.

Holmes retorts suavely: "And the wolfhound no doubt disapproved of the financial bargain."

But the solution turns out to be nearly as silly as poor Watson's speculation. Obviously, Conan Doyle's heart wasn't in this weak spoof. His son had been killed in the Great War, and he'd become preoccupied with spiritualism—a pursuit the skeptical Holmes would have scorned.

Nevertheless, Sherlock Holmes remains as surely immortal as Hamlet. And even a Holmes couldn't fully explain one mystery: that of his incredible appeal to the popular imagination. ◈

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Educated at Home

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.

"Let us eat and make merry."

—Luke 15:23

"This has been a happy time: I've spent all day with my family, eaten a fine meal, played with my grandchildren, been to a baptism, *and* I went to communion." These were the words of my uncle—with their telling rhetorical climax—on leaving his sister's house in Eastern North Carolina one Sunday evening last fall. I was back visiting, and the family had converged for the baptism of a little "first cousin once-removed." The baptism had been held on a communion Sunday at the Methodist church. After, there was a reception at home, with the preacher and his wife, friends, and the usual compliment of children running around the yard on all four sides of the house, messing up their good clothes.

At the buffet table, groaning with biscuits, tiny butter beans, field peas, squash, green beans, chicken, gravy, rice, "congealed salad," chess pie, and sweet iced tea, my favorite cousin declared, "Well, John and Anne [the little neophyte's parents] didn't do any better than Adam and Eve, but we fixed that today!" As a true theologian, the embarrassment of bodily delights laid out before us did not distract him from contemplating *in concreto* the lofty revealed truths of the Gospel. I sat down and took in the beautiful scene, breathing in that specific and memorable fragrance, a combination of cool forced air and dried eucalyptus, blended with coffee, perhaps, or a whiff of tobacco, that tells one he is at home in the South.

Such words and such a picture are as hard to imagine among such tradition-minded, observant Catholics or Protestants as there still are in the Southern California where I live and work, as they are (still?) not unusual in the South. Yet there are, in the scene so briefly described, indications of what it is that they need to obtain and preserve, if they are to survive in any measure at all.

At first glance, it might seem that the principal thing to be noted is the persistence of faith in the power and worth of the Christian Sacraments. This surely is the most important aspect of life—the means to eternal beatitude beyond this world. Yet the Sacraments as signs are rooted in the stages and needs of human life, both individual and common: birth, growth to maturity, nourishment, hygiene and healing, procreation and education, and government. In order for them to be significant enough in the lives of the faithful for them to persevere in their celebration, it is usually—barring moral miracles that do, in fact, occur—necessary that the natural sense of these rhythms be felt. This sense should become instinctive and not reflective, taken for granted, not subject to doubt or skepticism.

The most serious and dangerous challenge for Christians today is not precisely the loss of faith and religious practice among the fallen away, but a more material, basic human threat—namely, the lack *among believers* of a human cultural foundation capable of disposing them and their offspring to persevere in the Faith. I mean here not a lack of cultural *Hochformen*, but a lack of culture in its everyday, domestic, and social sense. This deficit produces among devout Christians a "mere" religiosity, a reduction of Christian life to explicit devotion and moral uprightness, and the sense that these things suffice, and that culture is at best an accidental thing, harmful if secular and amoral, helpful to the extent that it is or can be made explicitly religious.

In this case, religious practice either takes the place of culture or is indifferent to it so long as it is not clearly contrary to faith and good—especially sexual—morals.

These two extremes are easily found among pious Christians today. Both of them discount the essential continuity between faith and culture: the former, by way of defect; the latter, by way of excess. On one end of this movement between contraries of the same genus, I have found pious people who educate their children at home. In order to keep their little imaginations free from dangerous phantasms, they do not let them play any games or sing any songs that are not explicitly religious. I recently witnessed such little children in a group of others at a reception, unable to sing "Three Blind Mice" or "Do, Re, Mi." On the other end, I have found among the same homeschoolers enthusiasts for "Christian rap," science fiction, or advertising, to whom it seems that cultural forms are neutral and that anything can be "baptized" for use with the young. These can be seen wearing "Got Jesus?" T-shirts or holding coed youth conferences with such slogans as "Chastity is Hardcore." In the case of either extreme, there is an inability to sense a distinction between the sacred and the profane: If everything must or can be sacred, nothing will be clearly and securely so.

Accidentally, some might persevere in the Faith through—or better, in spite of—such excesses, but they are utterly incapable of guaranteeing the perseverance of most of us. Yet traditional Christian culture—particularly in the quotidian, familial forms described in the scene depicted above—always has and still can assure this perseverance in all but the most depraved. This is the culture in which we must strive to educate our children, and in which we must strive to live ourselves. I say "strive," since, in most places, what was once taken for granted is now a conscious choice. This is itself a great disadvantage, but such is our lot in these latter days.

How are we to maintain this balance and continuity? I offer here an insight that may guide us in the concrete. Saint Augustine sums up the efficacious power to persevere in the good with the expression *delectatio victrix*, "the pleasure which

Father Hugh is prior of St. Michael's Abbey in Trabuco Canyon, California.

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overcomes"—overcomes, that is, all resistance to the good proposed. While he is careful, as are all the Fathers, to stay miles away from any Epicurean speculation, Saint Augustine expounds the working of grace in terms of a concretely irresistible attraction and enjoyment. The notion derives directly from the psychology of classical rhetorical discourse. The separation of the pleasures of daily life from the practice of religion, either by eliminating them or by pursuing them independently of the Faith or incompatibly with It, makes perseverance in the Faith difficult indeed. In order to believe in the higher delights offered by the mysteries of faith, one must experience the reasonable, ordinary pleasures of earthly life as good and as readily available. This continuity is what is seen in the Sunday-afternoon scene illustrated above.

In the second part of the *Summa Theologiae* (I-I, q. 34, a. 1, ad 3), Saint Thomas responds to the notion that all bodily pleasure is evil. He, of course, rejects this opinion, and with considerable practical psychological insight. An objection has been raised that there is no virtue or art whose purpose is to produce pleasure, and, thus, no pleasure can be good. The Angelic Doctor responds:

> Art is not concerned with all kinds of good, but with the making of external things . . . But actions and passions, which are within us, are more the concern of prudence and virtue than of art. Nevertheless there is an art of making pleasure, namely, "the art of cookery and the art of making arguments," as stated in the Nicomachean Ethics vii, 12.

Here, "the art of cookery and the art of making arguments" are the chief components of culture at the higher and the lower ends of human happiness. Simply put, if, in a believing family, there is close attention to the quality of meals in both their culinary and their social aspects, and if, in the same family, care is taken to read and discuss the best sources, then the pleasure concomitant with these bodily and rational requirements of our nature will serve as a strong motivation for the will to retain the revealed Faith and moral virtue celebrated and proclaimed in the same family. Passing pleasures form the memory and stir up a nostalgia for the good things that never end.

The miracle at Cana, the double multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the Last Supper, the supper at Emmaus, the Risen Savior's eating in the Upper Room, the lakeside breakfast of fish grilled by the Lord Himself—all of these accompany His most sublime teachings and promises. Similarly, the sharing of food in the circle of the family and the sharing of thoughts in conversation are like two brackets between which all that is of any value in our culture can be contained. If we do not form our children after this evangelical model, is there any wonder that they fall away? The authority of our teaching is founded on the concrete care we take of those we educate. *Alumnus* means "one who has been nourished." The analogy is telling and immediately intelligible. A father must ask himself what the quality is of his children's experience of the taking of bodily nourishment. *Do they eat with him? Do they speak of what they have learned as they eat? Does he listen and respond?* Burdened with the responsibility of teaching his children mysteries so sublime, he dare not fail to give them the most fundamental motives of credibility for what he asserts. Why else would Our Lord sum up all our requests for good things with, "Give us this day our daily bread"? Dad may be a frequent communicant, but if he hopes that his son will be one, he should ask himself when the last time was that he passed him the bread at his own table.

On one end of this movement between contraries of the same genus, I have found pious people who educate their children at home. In order to keep their little imaginations free from dangerous phantasms, they do not let them play any games or sing any songs that are not explicitly religious.

Christians of orthodox profession should not leave the natural analogies for Christian life to the left. Feuerbach—whose influence in the English-speaking world, sad to say, can be attributed to his translator George Eliot, of whom I would have expected better, or at least not so bad—began the whole materialist reduction of the Gospel miracles and Christian Sacraments to signs and celebrations of nature and life. It did not take much to vulgarize his already banal analyses, and so they can be heard in "religious ed" and liturgy workshops anywhere and in any mainstream denomination (among whom, I sadly admit, Catholics must be included), repeated by those who have not the slightest idea that they are heirs of the great low-church Hegelian protocommunist. The shallow emoting and mediocre religious enthusiasm of current approaches to worship, so ugly and destructive, would not, perhaps, have been possible, if the right-believing had taken seriously the necessity of attending to the quality of the rhythm of family observances. Our people lost an instinctive revulsion to the shallow and shoddy. Television took them away from the table and became the measure of their mealtimes—and the limit of their conversation.

Today's Christian parents cannot presume on a renewal of the miraculous interventions narrated in the Gospels. They have already occurred for our instruction. Those charged with the education of children must do what they can, not tempting the Divinity to supply for things that He has given them the power to provide. That which is truly beyond our power He gives us as a free gift, but, nonetheless, there is much that we can do. Xenophon's Socrates has no patience with those who rely on higher powers to do what is in a man's own ability to accomplish. In his *Memorabilia*, he tells us that

> It is . . . irrational to seek the guidance of heaven in matters which men are permitted by the gods to decide for

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On the other end, I have found among the same homeschoolers enthusiasts for "Christian rap," science fiction, or advertising, to whom it seems that cultural forms are neutral.

themselves by study: to ask, for instance, Is it better to get an experienced coachman to drive my carriage or a man without experience? Is it better to get an experienced seaman to steer my ship or a man without experience? So too with what we may know by reckoning, measurement or weighing. To put such questions to the gods seemed to his mind profane. In short, what the gods have granted us to do by help of learning, we must learn; what is hidden from mortals we should try to find out from the gods by divination: for to him that is in their grace the gods grant a sign.

In the Sacraments, which are at the apex of Christian culture, God has truly given us a sign that is in His grace to give. So we need not seek to divine more. The rest (and it is a great deal), He has given us to accomplish. When our children know the content of the divine oracles of Sacred Scripture and share the graced signs thereof, we cannot then count ourselves as having done all we can, for that is profane presumption, evidence that, far from appreciating heavenly gifts, we expect even earthly things for free. They will surely notice this lack of effort—literally, of "study"—on our part, and so the authority on which our teaching rests will be undermined. Constant care and sustained effort go into providing a setting like that described at the beginning of this article. True pleasures, pleasures which make it easier to believe, and carry one safely through the challenges of daily life (what other kind is there?), are obtained with a lot of work. *Delectatio victrix*, I said, is the Augustinian expression; it might be translated as "pleasure which comes with struggle." These are the pleasures that bring our children home and make them want to be good. One does not have to be a Luddite or a Hobbit to put these insights into practice. Our children simply need to learn in a context where the basic needs of human life are met with care.

A word to the parents who have done all they can, and whose sons and daughters have fallen away. There is a parable for you, that of the prodigal son: a parable of a successful domestic education. Was it not the basic human pleasures found in his father's house that moved him to come to himself and return with a heart full of hopeful compunction? *Delectatio victrix*: If there is a fatted calf, and music, and dignified vesture, and paternal discourse, we will all persevere until that Sunday afternoon at home comes which no evening shadow will follow. ◁

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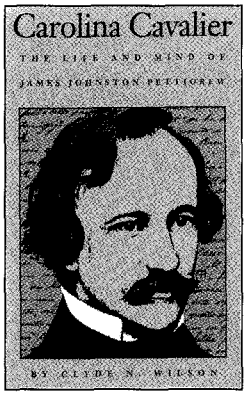

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The Supreme Court, Globalization, and the Teaching of Religion

by Tom Landess

Melanie Anderson

Public figures talk about globalization as if it were the Rapture. We are told that, unlike Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus, we live in an era of international trade; so these days, we must worry more about what the world thinks and does. As Justice Sandra Day O'Connor told the Southern Center for International Studies, "No institution of government can afford any longer to ignore the rest of the world. One-third of our gross domestic product is internationally derived."

Along the same lines, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said in an address to the American Society of International Law: "Yes, we should approach foreign legal materials with sensitivity to our differences and deficiencies, but those differences and deficiencies, I believe, should not lead us to abandon the effort to learn what we can from the experience and good thinking foreign sources may convey."

Justices Stevens, Breyer, Souter, and Kennedy have signaled their agreement. Indeed, in 1988, scholar Anthony Lester, writing in the *Columbia Law Review*, spoke of the then-emerging globalist court as "giving fresh meaning to the principles of the Bill of Rights."

With the predisposition of these justices to learn from foreigners, shouldn't they take a second look at the judicial prohibition against religion in our schools? Currently, the very presence of a Bible on a teacher's desk is cause for alarm. School-bus drivers pounce on little girls telling their beads. Religious clubs are ordered off campuses. Recently, school authorities turned off a student's microphone in the middle of her valedictory address because she was about to say the word "Chr--t."

Are we following the lead of the rest of the world in this regard? Most people would answer, "Yes." We like to hang out with European nations, and everyone knows Europeans have stopped going to church. They no longer believe in God. They certainly would not allow a religious thought to poke its nose into the classroom.

A quick survey of educational practices in European countries belies that assumption.

In Austria, religious education is "compulsory," and, to a degree, the courses are unapologetically sectarian. According to the Austrian Press and Information Service, "78% of the Austrian population are Roman Catholics, while a further 5% are Protestants, most of them belonging to the Augsburg confession. About 4.5% belong to other groups while the remaining 9% are non-denominational and 3.5% provided no information." APIS explains how the system works: "Religious education in Austrian schools is not restricted to the Roman Catholic confession: children belonging to smaller churches, and religious communities receive religious education in their own confession. Their teachers are paid by the State."

The Roman Catholic Church trains Her religious teachers, and teachers from other faiths are trained in special academies, then examined by their respective religious bodies. So, in the Austrian system, all faiths are represented in the classroom.

Historically, Belgium has contained two large and distinct populations—one, culturally French; the other, culturally Dutch. For this reason, there are essentially two Belgian school systems: one for the French-speaking sector, one for the Dutch-speaking sector. Both systems require religious or ethical instruction as part of the curriculum. The Belgian government officially recognizes six religious categories: Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, and Orthodox, as well as Jews and Muslims. Where sufficient support exists, these religious groups can request that the beliefs of their respective faiths be incorporated into the curriculum of local public schools. Thus, in

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Belgium, students may have a variety of choices in religious instruction; and, in some instances, the state actually funds the propagation of specific creeds. On the other hand, nonbelievers are accommodated by the provision of an alternative course in nonreligious ethics.

While we are at it, let's look at Canada, whose culture is derived from Europe. In recent years, the Canadian government—in a lurch to the left—has appeared more and more hostile to religious values. The passage of a "hate crimes" bill prohibiting the criticism of homosexuality has alarmed some clergy, who fear they will be dragged from their pulpits if they read certain biblical passages. However, the law specifically exempts condemnation of homosexuality in religious discourse. Besides, Canada has a highly decentralized school system that the federal government does not control.

Until quite recently, Quebec, Newfoundland, and Ontario—three of Canada's ten provinces—supported Roman Catholic education. In recent years, Newfoundland and Quebec have modified their systems, but Ontario still maintains publicly funded Catholic schools. In some respects, this system resembles practice in the early days of the United States, when some states had established churches.

In Finland, the law mandates that all children attend school for nine years. The system is divided into two levels of "comprehensive school"—a lower stage (grades one through six) and an upper stage (grades seven through nine). At both levels, students are required to take a course called Religion or Philosophy of Life.

Again, we see an accommodation to nonbelievers. Because Finland has a national church whose beliefs are taught in the public school, Finnish Freethinkers complained to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights about the "dominant role of the national religion in the curriculum of the history of religions." That was in 1979. In response, the Finnish parliament passed legislation establishing the Philosophy of Life course restricted to pupils unattached to religious communities.

By law, French students must receive moral and civic instruction, as opposed to "religious" instruction. However, all types of schools—private as well as public, religious as well as secular—receive funding from the French government, though with an admonition that there be no religious discrimination. However, even sectarian instruction is permitted in some publicly funded schools (*e.g.*, in Alsace-Moselle). Thus, while the French—in their highly centralized and micromanaged educational system—do not include religious instruction in the curriculum, they see nothing wrong with funding religious schools with state-collected taxes.

The German school system requires religious instruction at several levels. However, students who object to studying religion have the option of taking a course in ethics. Whether the teaching of religion is designed to present a body of knowledge or to build character, it is an integral part of German education. Religion stands side by side with social studies, history, geography, biology, chemistry, and other traditional disciplines.

Americans who object to any relationship between Church and state would be shocked by the "church tax," a method of funding churches that exists in several European countries. This "tax" is actually a contribution by members to their respective churches—withheld from a worker's paycheck along with income taxes or collected in prepayments from the self-employed. The amount of the church tax is calculated on the basis of income tax, with the government taking a cut for its collection services. Churches may choose to collect the taxes themselves if they so desire. About 70 percent of church revenues in Germany come from these taxes.

In many respects, Holland is the most libertine nation in Europe, and Amsterdam has replaced Paris and Hamburg as the most permissive city. The Dutch have legalized physician-assisted suicide and prostitution, lowered the age of consent almost to early adolescence, sanctified homosexual "marriage," and allowed marijuana to thrive in its coffeehouses. Yet, like Germany and other European countries, she gives students the choice between religious education (either Protestant or Catholic) and an ethics course.

The Dutch government also funds religious schools. Its Ministry of Education and Science has stated that, in keeping with their constitution, "People have the right, and the opportunity, to found schools based on their own religious or other convictions, or on their own educational principles." Lest anyone say that the Dutch system is like our own, consider what follows: "Under the terms of the Constitution, all schools are funded on an equal basis. In other words, the government funds public and private schools in the same way . . . The financial equality for similar kinds of schools irrespective of their denomination has produced an intricate network of legislation and regulations."

Norwegians, like other Scandinavians, pay scant attention to religion. The average weekly church attendance in Norway is 5 percent, as opposed to 44 percent in the United States. Yet Norway has an established church—the Lutheran Church of Norway—and requires religious education in her schools. The Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief, a liberal group, describes the religious curriculum as follows: "Even though the subject shall provide knowledge about other religions as well as secular worldviews, it has a basic emphasis on knowledge about Christianity and the Christian cultural heritage of Norway."

In Sweden, where four percent of the people attend church weekly, the government has been hostile to religion. In 2003, when a Pentecostal preacher in his pulpit described homosexuality as "abnormal, a horrible cancerous tumor in the body of society," he was hauled into court, charged with inciting hatred based on sexual orientation, found guilty, and sentenced to one month in prison. (An appeals court reversed the decision.) Yet religion is taught in Swedish schools, though beyond the level where subjects are compulsory. Like the arts, another impractical discipline, it takes up the least number of hours; but it is still a part of the public-school curriculum and is offered in every program, including science, economics, and technology.

In Spanish schools, children are taught the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. After all, 94 percent of the population is Catholic. However, parents are asked when they enroll their children in school if they wish to opt out of religious education. So the course is not required of everyone.

In Italy, religious education is mandated by the Italian Concordat of 1984, which states that all state schools must offer such courses. They consist largely of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Religion is not a compulsory course, but between 93 and 96 percent enroll, perhaps because the Catholic population of Italy exceeds 97 percent.

After this cursory survey of religious education abroad, it is obvious that the United States is out of step with European practice, and probably more so than in areas the Supreme Court has cited to bolster recent majority opinions—for ex-

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ample, the legalization of homosexuality. Indeed, such organizations as the ACLU and People for the American Way seem almost reactionary in light of what's going on in European education. So why have our justices refused to show the same deference to other more "progressive nations" when weighing the constitutionality of religion in public schools?

One argument immediately pops up, wagging its finger at those who would like to return God to the classroom: "In America, we have the First Amendment." Well, several European nations have similar statements that are as legally binding as the Bill of Rights. Yet foreign courts see no contradiction between law and practice. Neither did U.S. courts for the better part of 200 years. Children recited prayers in school, listened sleepily to Bible readings each morning, and put on Christmas plays. Then the Age of Ideology overtook us, and we severed our ties with the past.

Will the activists on the Supreme Court follow their own advice and consult Europe the next time they decide a case involving the relationship between religion and education? More to the point, should concerned Americans try to introduce religion courses into the curricula of our public schools?

The answer to the first question is obvious: The present majority would never undermine Justice Brennan's 1963 prayer decision or its subsequent expansion. In other cases where foreign law runs contrary to their inclination, these same justices ignore it. At American University, Justice Scalia made this point in a debate with Justice Breyer on the subject of foreign law. "[W]e are one of only six countries in the world that allow abortion on demand at any time prior to viability. Should we change that because other countries feel differently? . . . Or do we just use foreign law selectively?" By "we," Justice Scalia means "they," because he has never cited foreign legal sources in an opinion, unless you count English Common Law.

As for the second question—whether we should introduce European-style religious courses into American schools—would we want the current educational establishment to write the curriculum? If so, our children would be studying Wicca, Santeria, and the religious uses of peyote. As for the section on Christianity, it would deal primarily with the Inquisition and the Salem witch trials. We would be wise to live with the *status quo* until times change.

Too bad: The Europeans have it right this time. If approached properly, religion is a legitimate discipline, one that could be taught at almost any level in our public schools. It has its own set of facts, its own history, and its own way of perceiving reality. Like philosophy, you can study it without believing in it. And it has the relevance to everyday life that the pragmatists have called for in education. Religion is one of the most important forces in the shaping of society—any society. You cannot walk down the street of a town or city without seeing steeples, crosses, stars of David, hospitals, soup kitchens, and other reminders of its presence. Yet in America, children are forbidden to discuss it in school, as if it were either totally irrelevant or obscene.

This situation can be altered only by a different kind of Supreme Court—one willing to consider the intent of the Framers in drafting the First Amendment and to respect the long history of religious observances in the American public-school system. In examining both intent and history, another set of justices might also want to take a look at the law and practice in foreign countries. Such an approach might prove instructive. ◈

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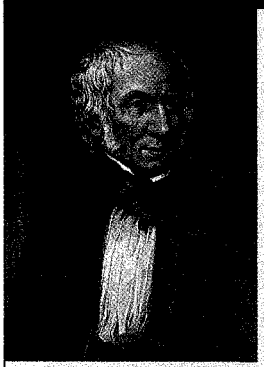

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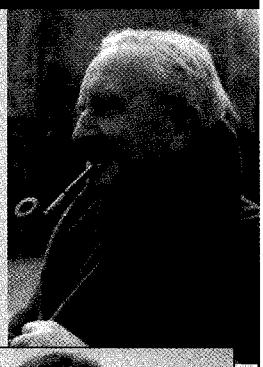

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Education to the Rescue

How Radical Republican Teachers Reconstructed the South

by Troy Kickler

In the early 1900's, Reconstruction studies (excluding the work of W.E.B. DuBois) approved quick restoration of states, Andrew Johnson's strict constitutionalism, and white Southerners' revolt against military and Republican rule (which consisted of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and freedmen). These studies—named the "Dunning School" for historian William A. Dunning, whose students applied his interpretation to individual Southern states—were "pro-Southern," writes Eric Foner in *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (1988), and portrayed black suffrage as the "gravest error" of the period. They are charged with glossing over what has been labeled "unreconstructed sordidness."

By the 1950's, historians did an about-face. The Revisionist school considered Johnson's constitutionalism a veneer for racism and labeled the Ku Klux Klan terrorists, instead of freedom fighters. Revisionists also argued that Reconstruction was not a time of black supremacy and that Republicans were humanitarians, not vindictive opportunists.

By the 1970's, a Post-Revisionist school considered Reconstruction a "tragic era" for reasons different from those of the Dunning School: Government intervention had been too limited, and the United States had abandoned the freedmen. Interestingly, many Post-Revisionists' interpretations inadvertently support much of what the Dunning School found—for example, that U.S. soldiers mistreated the freedmen.

On today's American campuses, Eric Foner's interpretation of Reconstruction reigns supreme. Undergraduates not only learn about a Southern subregionalism and the freedmen's experience but are indoctrinated with concepts of positive liberty and the supposed inseparability of race and class. Reconstruction was an effort, argues Foner, to live up to a noble creed. But then localism, *laissez-faire* principles, and racism "rearrested themselves," and "the federal government progressively abandoned efforts to enforce civil rights in the South." Reconstruction would have to wait a century before it was fully accomplished.

In the last two decades, Reconstruction historiography has emphasized black agency and fostered an awkward alliance among Dunning, Revisionist, and Post-Revisionist advocates. For example, a 2005 work asserts that blacks "transformed public education in the American South, to the great benefit of both black and white people." Although such studies reflect a multicultural mind-set and frequently exaggerate black agency, they do reveal how black Southerners sometimes clashed with Northern missionaries and Freedman's Bureau agents.

The historiography of education during Reconstruction has somewhat mirrored general interpretations of the period. Unfairly criticized and dismissed today for ignoring blacks, Henry L. Swint, in *The Northern Teacher in the South* (1941), argues that white Southerners did not oppose the education of freedmen but resented zealous missionary and Bureau teachers indoctrinating children. In the 1980's, Jacqueline Jones' *Soldiers of Light and Love*; Robert C. Morris's *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*; and Ronald E. Butchart's *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction* were the authoritative sources on Reconstruction education. They contended that paternalistic Northerners believed education solved all societal problems and formed an educational "army of civilization" to "Yankeeize" the South. However, according to Morris, blacks "needed land, protection, and a stake in society" more than they needed schooling, and Reconstruction's "most durable myth" was the "stereotypical Yankee schoolmarm."

Recent scholarship ignores the attitudes and experience of average white Southerners and considers Northern educators, at worst, as paternalists misguided by evangelical fervor. Rarely do modern studies investigate the mind of the white South during the turbulent days of Reconstruction, for historians are convinced that they already have it figured out. Influenced by postmodernism and multiculturalism, social historians examine only the gritty details of freedmen's lives. And influenced by historical materialism, few wonder how ideas and worldviews affected Northerners' and Southerners' behavior or remember that ideological warfare raged across a war-devastated South.

One notable exception is historian John Chodes, whose *Destroying the Republic: Jabez Curry and the Re-education of the Old South*, uncovers what many modern historians have overlooked: an ideological war to redefine America.

As an Alabama politician before the War Between the States, Jabez Curry championed state sovereignty and limited government. After the war, however, Curry took the helm of the Peabody Education Fund. Chodes argues that this organization worked with authorities and public educators to eradicate secessionist thought and convince Americans to support a centralist regime. To Chodes, Reconstruction was a violent effort to redefine the United States, and the destruction wrought by this ideological war can still be seen today every time Americans unquestionably support government intervention.

In particular, Radical Republicans considered the War Between the States a "purifying act of God" and a means of retribution and collective salvation. According to Presbyterian Samuel T. Spear of Brooklyn, New York, in 1863, the United States must connect "the destinies of Christianity and civilization on this continent with one permanent, indivisible, powerful, progressive nationality," because the nation was "made for growth, for increase of population, for the organization and addition of new States, for an indefinite augmentation of the States that glitter on its flag." Southern secession, believed

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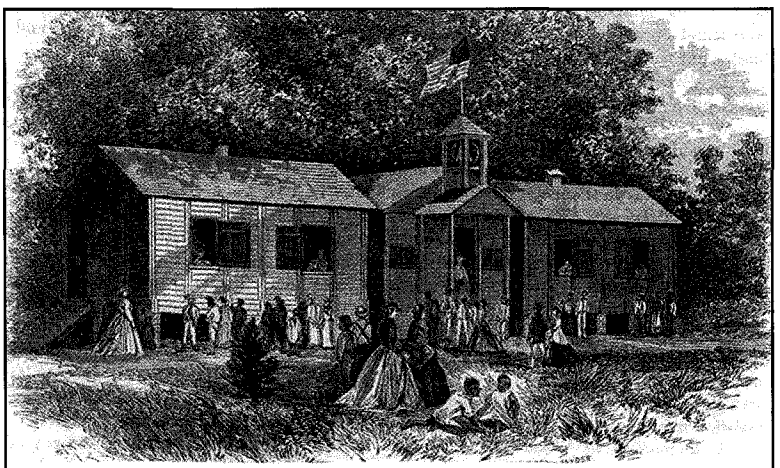
Charles Sumner, would divide and weaken the country, thereby preventing the establishment of a "national example" more "puissant than army or navy for the conquest of the world." So, national strength had to be exercised, and secession made forever odious. Aaron F. Stevens of New Hampshire exclaimed, "The irresistible power of the nation . . . under Abraham Lincoln, was its strength, its glory, and its salvation, for no government can be respectable or respected unless it possesses and exercises sufficient power to crush out and place under its foot its enemies." Stevens found allies among many Southern Unionists, who were, at times, every bit as nationalistic. A rag of vitriolic Methodist minister and Tennessee governor William G. Brownlow, the *Knoxville Whig*, read thus on March 28, 1866: "The endless perpetuation of the Federal Union is the gist of radicalism. Everything must be subordinate to that."

Education was the key to Reconstruction success and nation building. On the heels of the soldier came the Yankee teacher, who used, according to Henry Highland Garrett, "the spelling book, the Bible, and the implements of industry" as weapons of ideological war, and "schoolhouses and the Church of Christ" as forts. It is no surprise that Radicals such as O.O. Howard (known as the "Christian Soldier"), national superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau and author of *Our Christian Duty to the South* (1866), and Superintendent of Bureau Education John W. Alvord, in his biannual reports, considered education as the cornerstone of Reconstruction and recommended compulsory attendance. John Eaton, superintendent of Tennessee public schools (1867-69), agreed: "the State [of Tennessee] protects itself" when demanding school attendance.

The soldiers in this ideological war came from various backgrounds and had various levels of commitment. Many blacks did indeed establish schools, especially in the rural areas, and sought small donations from northern missionaries and local Bureau agencies. Some former Confederates even taught in public and Bureau schools, and more than a few white Southerners supported public education. (Granted, there was more local control of schools at the time.) Still, most educators hailed from above the Mason-Dixon line. Of the 9,503 teachers in Southern freedmen schools in 1869, approximately 5,000 left family and friends in the North and traveled south mainly to be missionaries in what many believed to be a pagan land. Many were Radicals, militantly devoted to abstract ideas such as positive liberty, and worked to establish a Republican Party in the South. Their numbers, as Revisionists argue, were much larger than previously thought.

Although concerned with teaching numbers and letters, Radical educators considered socialization and civic instruction most important. "Teachers . . . should not drill in mere technical scholarship," wrote John W. Alvord. For what America most needed, argued Reuben Tomlinson, the superintendent of the South Carolina Bureau, was an "intelligent and loyal population." A "proper education" eliminated a need for martial law and judicial activism, for children would be molded into Puritans, whom Henry Ward Beecher defined as promoting "the welfare of the state and want[ing] public affairs conducted in accordance to morals and religion." A "proper education" also incorporated the Republican emphasis on free labor and ensured that freedmen evinced "Christian virtues" and demonstrated an ability to make a profit. Therefore, missionaries chose textbooks to inculcate "patriotic character" and create a "moral, virtuous, and Christian people" that served "the purposes of truth and progress." To accomplish their goals, educators taught not only thriftiness, punctuality, temperance, industry, and sexual purity but "proper" manliness and domesticity, cleanliness and dress, and food preparation and house construction. For a while, individual instructors chose their own texts. But the decentralization of curriculum contributed to conflicting interpretations of American and Christian values, so, in some states and localities, the standardization of texts was encouraged.



"Education Among the Freedman," c. 1864. (Library of Congress)

Sometimes curricula included a conspicuous partisan import. Radical Republicans worked to establish their party in the South and considered freedmen, according to historian John Hope Franklin, to be the "best hope for building and maintaining a strong political organization that would keep the Radical in power." In freedmen's schools, children commonly learned to venerate Abraham Lincoln and occasionally made resolutions that endorsed Republican candidates for local and state offices. As John W. Alvord writes, the purpose of schools was to "produce a fraternity of feeling with us among the people, especially the common classes." What they seemed to have wanted, however, was a republicanism that demanded obedience instead of participation.

When Northerners arrived in the South, they met freedmen who exhibited an intense desire to learn and to educate their children. Traveling across the South, J.T. Trowbridge saw freedmen "starv[ing] themselves and go[ing] without clothes" so that their children might attend school, and Bureau agents were impressed by large classes (sometimes nearing 300 students) working quietly and diligently. In well-run schools, many children appreciated their teachers for their labors and for being "true, earnest, and consistent friend[s]." Many blacks traveled for miles each day to attend school, and more than a few adults attended night school after a hard day's work. Some isolated communities hired teachers, black and white, with only rudimentary knowledge. Financial circumstances, however, dictated that many freedmen attend only Sabbath schools, where Northern missionaries taught them the same Christian duties and American values that they would have learned in Bureau and missionary day and public schools.

In these schools, black students were told that their parents still succumbed to vices acquired during bondage; therefore, they should be beacons in a spiritual world of darkness and shun not only alcohol and tobacco but exuberant worship and incorrect parental instruction (in other words, whatever con-

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tradicted Radical Republicanism). In large numbers, younger children joined such clubs as the Vanguard of Freedom and the Band of Hope and pledged to resist all manner of temptation while holding their peers accountable. For not smoking, drinking, or gambling, young members earned certificates and ribbons and, most of all, the teacher's praise. (It is not surprising that young black ministers during the 1880's fervently promoted temperance.) Still, continued alcohol use particularly troubled missionaries. Some children saw and heard their parents laugh when Bureau agents asked them to sign O.O. Howard's temperance pledges.

Missionaries and Freedman's Bureau agents worked to redefine the family. The Radical never passed opportunities in churches and schools or during home visits to tell freedmen how to live.

On the other hand, white Southerners were more ambivalent toward freedmen and public schools. Believing that they would personally benefit from the fruits of public education, more than a few whites supported it. Some were even on its payroll. In 1866, many white North Carolinians taught rural black schools, and a former Confederate lieutenant taught a Fayetteville school, to name just two examples. Other whites reacted violently. Although congressional committees never found firsthand evidence, it is not unreasonable to deduce that unreconstructed Southerners were responsible for the torching of schoolhouses and assaults on male teachers. Not coincidentally, many of the arsons and beatings occurred in predominantly Unionist areas, where antiblack rhetoric abounded.

The number of school arsons and assaults increased dramatically in 1868. Before then, far less violent opposition to freedmen's education existed. Indeed, many whites, as Du-Bois writes, harshly criticized the establishment of freedmen schools. But disapproval does not mean violence. The worst a superintendent in Florida could report in 1866, for example, was that "in no case have the people shown a willingness to render us any assistance." It must be remembered, too, that Bureau agents were required to report "outrages"—and did so in great detail. Many times, however, agents recorded that "Harmony and quiet prevail." Good reports (or the lack of bad ones) indicate that freedmen in many places attended school without fear or interruption. In the fall of 1867, sentiments started changing, and, in the election year of 1868, violence abounded. After the election, violence subsided, and, following 1870, sources record even fewer "manifestations of opposition."

So, why the sudden increase in violence? Chiefly, it was because white Southerners by and large opposed the use of schools as an arm of the Republican Party. U.S. Gen. John Tarbell testified to Congress in 1866 that Southern whites were not, by and large, "bitter against individual Northerners." They even welcomed Northern businessmen who assimilated into local communities. They were not necessarily against freedmen education—or segregated public education, for that matter. They did, however, despise educators and missionaries instilling a Puritan mind-set in their children or turning schools into young-Republican clubs. They also condemned the Radical Republicans' conflation of the state and Christianity and its influence on the schools and public life. The editors of the conservative Memphis *Appeal*, for instance, called Northern religious leaders "unchristian" for fomenting revenge even while Union and Confederate generals had let "by gones be by gones." "We neither want clergy to act as our law-givers," the editors continued, "nor the Statesman to give lectures in theology. It is a remarkable fact that the more sanctimonious the man, the more devilish the tyrant."

Education reform involved more than schoolhouse construction and instruction, however. Labor and apprenticeship contracts reinforced what educators taught and ensured that those unable to attend school learned the American values of hard work and thrift. Bureau agents looked for employers who could foster "the moral and mental improvement" of the apprentices—that is, conformity to Northern values. Above all, agents wanted to find masters who taught children to be good citizens. Frustrated with unsuccessful searches for masters able to teach a "profitable trade," many agents resorted to placing children with farmers. Children pledged to "faithfully serve" their Bureau-approved masters and subjected themselves to their "authority and control" in "all respects." Employers, in turn, pledged to provide for apprentices and teach them "proper morality."

Bureau agents and missionaries worked to redefine the family, too. The Radicals never passed opportunities in churches and schools or during home visits to tell freedmen how to live. Parents were urged to avoid adultery and provide for their children—good values, no doubt—but disagreements emerged concerning such activities as playing cards, or regarding compulsory school attendance. Many freedmen dismissed this condescending paternalism, and rural parents in particular preferred children to help out on the farm during August and September. Black parents were encouraged to instruct children to work hard, deposit savings into the Freedmen's Bank, or donate to the missionary-outreach programs of their teacher's denomination. Economic progress, parents learned, was possible because the Great Emancipator, who had preserved the Union, had given them opportunity.

In the Reconstruction South, Radical missionaries worked with the Freedmen's Bureau in various efforts to teach black and white children not only the three *r*'s but a new definition of a "good American," one that was an unnatural hybrid of statism and Christianity. The Yankees had come to rescue a region from its backwardness and heathenism. This included eradicating secessionist thought and steering black and white Southerners on the trajectory toward Progress—a world where freedom was to be made universal by an American, humanitarian empire, revolving for the glory of God. However, as historian Susan Mary-Grant observes, the belief in a pagan or blighted Dixie says more about "the North's self-image than it did about the reality of the South." ©

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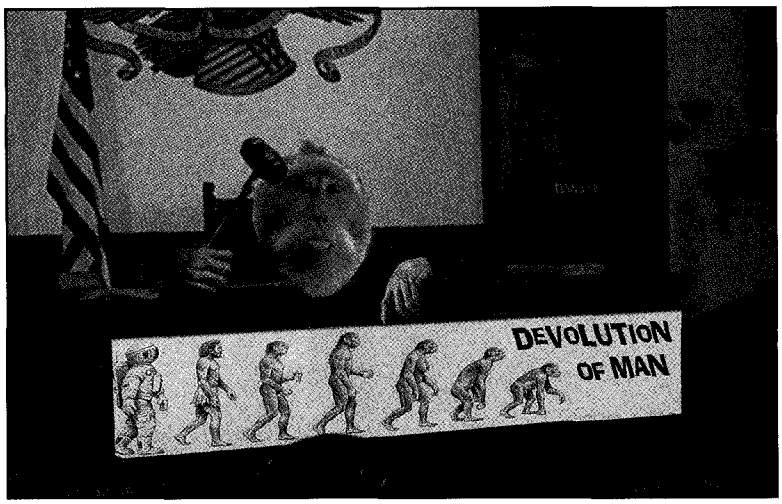
Too Much Monkey Business

Inherit the Agitprop

by James O. Tate



Melanie Anderson

Watching a disaster or beholding a disintegration is inherently destructive, but there is also an element of morbid fascination. Might there be, as well, a redemptive element in tracking the entropic parabola of the great fall of yet another Humpty Dumpty?

The national coverage of the recent conventions of the Episcopalian Church, U.S.A., and of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been mostly fixated on the politics of homosexuality, but, beneath that cloud of confusion, there is a larger story with a longer arc. The story of the Episcopal Church is a substantial part of the history of America, considered as an Anglo-Saxon settlement; and the disestablishment of the old Anglican churches is an illustration of the meaning of revolution. Add to that the history of the Presbyterian Church or churches, the demography represented by that church, and add again the history of the Methodist Church, the preaching of George Whitefield and another demography (and the founding of the first orphanage in America—where and when? Quiz later), and you have the story of the mainline churches in America. Their transformations are the changes of the country and a register of the history of the nation.

But these churches (and other churches such as the Congregationalist and the Lutheran ones) have a longer history going back through England and Scotland to the Continent. And, if you want to get picky, the history goes back further through the Reformation to the Middle Ages, all the way back to the Apostles. I have always thought, by the way, that the most difficult point of Christian theology is not the doctrine of the Atonement or of the Trinity but of Apostolic Succession. I had already begun to doubt this doctrine providentially, after meeting contemporary seminary graduates and Protestant ministers and reading the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, even before a certain lady told me of the remarks of her plumber—a preacher of some obscure sect, who declared that the Epistles were the wives of the Apostles.

So, having clarified at least that point of orthodox theology and established an historical perspective, we are ready for the news that the delegates to the convention of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have voted to "receive" (rather than "approve") a policy paper on "gender-inclusive" language for the Trinity. Congregations are not required to use the language—yet. But how could they resist "Mother, Child, and Womb" and "Rock, Redeemer, and Friend," as Andrea Dworkin- and Mary Daly-style replacements for "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"? We will magisterially declare the winner for the New Liturgical Language Award at the end of this essay, but, for now, we will only remark that "Presbyterian" is literally an odd name indeed for a "church" that is governed by the spirit of radical feminist blasphemy.

In the prevailing American tradition, the delegates to the convention of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have demonstrated that absurdity is justified by votes, and that theology, the logic of God, is just too tough for us girls and girly-boys. If there is a principle here, it is that, in modern Protestant America, nothing serious can be addressed without a gross collapse of mind and language, a feeble affirmation of banal Pelagianism, and a groveling display of servility before the gods of the marketplace. Why is it that there can be no grand image in America of great issues clashing—no Henry at Canossa, no Luther nailing his theses to the door, no Galileo hedging his recantation—but only the droning of another committee, limp-wristed *ayes* that have it, pathetic appeals to false authority, all mummy-wrapped in the smothering strands of liberal clichés.

There is, however, an exception to the parade of the insipid and the inane which fills the collective memory, and that is the remarkable film *Inherit the Wind* (1960), though there may be a question about just why or how it is "remarkable." Based on

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the Broadway play written by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee (!), *Inherit the Wind* is quite a cultural statement—some movie, indeed, taking as it does the Scopes "Monkey Trial" of 1925 as its subject. Interestingly enough, *Inherit the Wind* has been filmed three more times since 1960, suggesting either that producer/director Stanley Kramer did not get it right, or that the powerful message of the play cannot be told often enough, or perhaps that it cannot be shown often enough in the high schools of America. But the quadrupled presence of *Inherit the Wind* may also suggest that it is the play and its burden that matters, not its embodiment on film.

Even so, there remain a few points to be made about the original film, one of which is that it is, indeed, a very bad movie, and there are a lot of reasons why. Of course, there is an inherent difficulty in filming a play, but then that challenge is one that was inherent in the project. Another major flaw is the acting, and this is perhaps not to be blamed so much on the principals as upon the source and the director. Spencer Tracy certainly had his moments, but not with Stanley Kramer. The names were changed to protect the guilty, but this Clarence Darrow is no representation at all of anything like Darrow. (By the way, Orson Welles was just as bad or even worse as Darrow in *Compulsion*.) Fredric March was also a formidable actor, in his younger days a matinee idol and a star, but his version of William Jennings Bryan is a vicious grotesque—the sheer malice of the performance, unjustified by any notion of a pageant-like reenactment, is quite revealing of the agenda. And Gene Kelly as the H.L. Mencken figure is utterly inadequate in that role. *Inherit the Wind* is a big nothing as a movie, yet it is "important," and, even more, it is an X-ray or, better, an autopsy of the liberal imagination, or lack thereof.

As a product of the 1950's, the playwrights' vision was distorted by contemporary anxieties relating to McCarthyism and other such hysterias. The exposure of the left's entanglement with communism required many a deception, and *Inherit the Wind* was far from the only such example of willfully misleading agitprop, quite a bit of it emanating from Stanley Kramer—*Twelve Angry Men*, for example. The justification of liberal obscurantism led necessarily to outrageous misrepresentation, and that included the falsification of the characters and motives of men, and of events as well. Clarence Darrow was hardly the "thoughtful," "sincere" advocate of humane values whom we know from the film. He was, instead, a nasty piece of work, a grandstanding village atheist who took sadistic pleasure in baiting his inferiors—a very large group. We would not know from *Inherit the Wind* that, for reasons of discretion, the defense at the Scopes Trial did not want Darrow but could not keep him out.

The caricature of William Jennings Bryan in that film is so crude as to eclipse all the baggage that he brought with him to Dayton in 1925. Bryan was "the Great Commoner," an important player in the Democratic Party for decades, Democratic and Populist presidential candidate in 1896, Democratic candidate again in 1900 and 1908, and secretary of state in the Wilson administration until he resigned on matters of principle in 1915. A Presbyterian, populist, and progressive, anti-imperialist and antimilitarist, Bryan was the star of the Chautauqua circuit, the advocate of the common man, the foe of privilege and occulted power, the champion of a rural America that was fading before urban ascendancy and industrial combinations of wealth. He clung to "left wing" positions for reasons of Christian principle: the vote for women, temperance, the popular election of senators. The world was passing him by in 1925—he died five days after the trial ended—but it was Christian principle that required his attack on Darwinism and his defense of biblical inerrancy, a defense he hedged. The smug liberal fantasy of *Inherit the Wind* misrepresented everything about the Scopes Trial, including its real issue, about which Bryan was lucid. The complexity of Bryan is nowhere suggested in *Inherit the Wind*, and neither is his opposition to Darwinism on the grounds of the damage to the Western mind known as Social Darwinism. "The survival of the fittest" (a tautology meaning the "survival of the survivors") had suggested to many in America, including Mencken, that fraternal concern was a mistake: The poor, the sick, and the unfit should go under for the improvement of the species. Teutonic militarism was a product of Darwinism, Bryan thought, and Adolf Hitler and Margaret Sanger were later to confirm his convictions. Broadway and Hollywood were more comfortable with a twitching hick from the sticks than they were with William Jennings Bryan.

H.L. Mencken is another story altogether. When we think of him, it is words, not images, that come to mind, for Mencken was an extraordinary journalist—a prose poet—and he has been called the best writer in the America of his time. His brilliance of style and wit, however, was never matched by wisdom, for Mencken was trapped by his own limitations and unfortunate early influences. To admire extravagantly Wagner, T.H. Huxley, Nietzsche, and James Gibbons Huneker is a shaky foundation, however much Mencken made of it. His contempt for religion led him to what he called "prejudices" and errors of all sorts. In his famous essay "The Sahara of the Bozart," Mencken was quite wrong about the state of education in the South, and about the state of culture there as well; but that did not matter, for the engine of Mencken's prose hummed so efficiently that actual inquiry or observation was quite out of the question. In the case of the Monkey Trial, our intrepid reporter was Johnny-on-the-spot, but he was even more a hoofer going through the old song and dance than he was an observer. Mencken might just as well have stayed home in Baltimore and wired in his articles, for they did not get to the heart of anything. His reportage was just Menckenizing, and no one did that so well as he—the subject was irrelevant to the processing. When he described Bryan's hold over the people of the West and the South, he continued as follows:

> But out where the grass grows high, and the horned cattle dream away the lazy afternoons, and men still fear the powers and principalities of the air—out there between the corn-rows he held his old puissance to the end. There was no need for beaters to drive in his game. For miles the flivver dust would choke the roads. And when he rose at the end of the day to discharge his Message, there would be such breathless attention, such a rapt and enchanted ecstasy, such a sweet rustle of amens as the world had not known since Johann fell to Herod's ax.

I.J. Semper has called attention to the triple combination thrice repeated and the blank verse of this musical passage. But Semper has not asked any question about the attitudes displayed: Rustics are "game"; piety is illusory; a farm is a lazy place. These formulations are not the result of observation but are mere incantations, and the more removed they are from experience, the more musical they become. We can hardly expect that the mercurial, paradoxical Mencken could be even

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remotely portrayed in a hack movie.

Like Darrow, Mencken showed a revealing streak of sadism. Darrow delivered a nasty crack about Bryan's death, and, privately, Mencken actually gloated: "We killed the son-of-a-bitch!" Such remarks show something about the emotions surrounding the trial, and urban contempt for rural images was unmistakably involved. The city *versus* the country, the North *versus* the South and near West—these are familiar themes that played themselves out in Dayton. And though much has changed in America since 1925, these themes are still regularly sounded, like gongs. There is something frenzied about the hatred of religion and specifically of the Bible that I have heard violently expressed on many occasions, always in an academic setting. The city slicker is smarter than the country hick, but not so smart that he won't rub it in.

Today we still hear about controversies in the schools. "Creationism" is taught in the public schools in certain places, in parallel with or even eclipsing Darwinian expositions. Such an outrage to modernist complacency has to be misrepresented as an encroachment upon the separation of Church and state, which it certainly is not, for that doctrine has to do with the establishment of religion, as in the old Anglican dispensation. The real issue of the Scopes Trial, as Bryan knew and as the judge in the case knew, was the right of local authorities and even people to determine what was taught in the schools financed by taxes those people paid. That is still the issue today, and the issue is pointed, for it challenges us to think about what "education" means. Biology is one thing, and we know a lot more about it today than Darwin did, and science must be respected. Of course, science would be more respected if it did not so crudely adapt itself to politics, as it does deplorably in the weekly *Science* section of the *New York Times*, and as it did for the Nazi and Soviet regimes.

We can fully expect witch doctors in black robes to interpret the law and the Constitution to mean that scientism should be taught in the schools, and that the Bible should not be taught in the schools, and we should be prepared to deal with the consequences. The ideology that declares man to be an animal and nothing more is reflective of modern values and of the contemporary economy, which is arranged to appeal behavioristically to gross instincts. The contrary doctrine, that man was created in the image of God, imposes responsibilities that are counter-indicated by driver education, condom adjustment, and an accepting, diverse community. Private schools, homeschooling, taxpayer revolts, and Catholic schools are all answers to problems that the present regime denies. If the young are not to know the Bible, then what is it that they should know? The list of what they are not learning in school—grammar, languages, literature, history, geography, mathematics, science, and so on—is an imposing one, so that even if the Bible were taught in school, it might well become just another item on the list of what the students do not know.

And another curricular item that should replace the mendacious and misleading *Inherit the Wind* is Edward J. Larson's excellent work *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (1997). This unlikely Pulitzer Prize winner was published by Harvard University Press—yes, miracles happen every day! I rest my case, only to add—in response to many requests—that the winner for the New Liturgical Language Award is the following trendy Trinity: The Margarita Mix, the Nachos, and the Tequila. *Adios*, mainline Protestantism. ◈

Black Sea Sketches

BLACK SEA SKETCHES is a travel book written for serious travelers, including armchair travelers. Although the author may take an occasional swim or walk the beaches, the book is much more about the history and prehistory, the culture and the contemporary scene than about recreational opportunities. It is the kind of book you would want to read before or during your own travel in these fascinating countries.

The five countries—Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Georgia—often share military and economic history, but cultural contrasts abound: different alphabets and languages, different religions. While most of Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Georgia embrace the Orthodox faith, Turkey is largely Muslim, as is part of the Crimean population. All five of the countries reflect, especially architecturally, the common past of ancient Greece and, most of them, of the later Genoan commercial empire.

Rising above the glittering monuments of the past, however, are the people Mills met and the stories of their lives, often of great courage under pressure and of generosity to a stranger and a traveler.

Comments about other works of William Mills

"William Mills' stories draw the reader deeply into the hearts and minds of men and women to reveal the essential nature of Man in a world governed by forces so primal there is no resisting their call, no mitigation of their judgment."

—Gordon Weaver

"Seldom have I found a contemporary poet so intensely and humanly convincing. Mills' voice is very near the fraternal and memorable sounds we all want to make, and say."

—James Dickey

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Nation-Building and the U.S. Military

Reexamining America's Role

by Robert D. Hickson

America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq is the title of a 240-page strategic and historical study released in July 2003, four months after we invaded Iraq, by the RAND Corporation, an influential national-security institute that originally conducted special research for the U.S. Air Force. The early intellectual leadership of the RAND Corporation is still influential among neoconservatives. For example, the late Albert Wohlstetter and his friend Andrew Marshall (the long-serving and founding head of the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment—a very influential in-house think tank of the Department of Defense) have been mentors and strategic collaborators of Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, among others.

An implicit premise of the RAND study is that the U.S. military's newly proposed "core mission" of foreign "nation-building" can and should be conducted simultaneously with its dissipating "Global War on Terror." This combination, even at first glance, appears irrational.

Nonetheless, this study explicitly supports a new "core mission" of concurrent "nation-building" for our military, even though the GWOT (as it is affectionately known) itself increasingly eludes definition. Our military forces (including our reserves) are now exhaustingly overextended in their oft-reactive, yet pervasively inconclusive, operations without clearly knowing either the nature of the enemy or the kind of war we are in. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude, even at the outset, that any such protracted and concurrent combination of these two new "core missions" for the U.S. military will very soon produce an irreversible, self-inflicted, and self-sabotaging "binary weapon" (a unique combination that causes a detonation, or disintegrating implosion).

The RAND study entirely omits any discussion of these momentous matters, let alone their longer-range implications for war and peace and the rootedness of ordered life.

The study mentions five nation-building projects spanning the last 12 years: Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Haiti (the only non-Muslim country). With Iraq, however, the United States now "embarks on its most ambitious program of nation-building since 1945," when we purportedly engaged in nation-building in Germany and Japan. Both of those efforts were clearly, in the view of the RAND Corporation, "successful." It should be noted, however, that the study's only criterion of "success" in nation-building is the attainment of "democratization" and of a "vibrant economy."

The study argues that the United States did not invest sufficiently over recent years in the "capacity of the U.S. armed forces or of U.S. civilian agencies to conduct postcombat stabilization and reconstruction operations." (Notice the Newspeak and deliberate vagueness.) It also addresses the willingness of the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct such nation-building, beyond their capability to do so:

> Nation-building has been a controversial mission over the past decade, and the intensity of this debate has undoubtedly inhibited the investments that would be needed to do these tasks better. Institutional resistance in the departments of State and Defense, neither of which regard nation-building among their core missions, has also been an obstacle.

It is worthwhile to consider these words very carefully. The language is characteristic of the entire study, and the evasive style also reveals the authors' mentality, which so often seems stiflingly superficial, equivocally vague, and altogether frigid and presumptuous. RAND's critique offers nothing concrete and specific about the military's putative "institutional resistance" to engaging in nation-building or whether such resistance is intelligent (moral and strategic) or merely inertial.

Nor does the RAND study even mention the key arguments for or against such a demanding and deeply consequential (arguably neo-imperial and unconstitutional) mission. Such omissions of important and indispensable substance are altogether unprofessional—as well as subtly sophistic. For, like the sophists of ancient Greece, the RAND-study authors attempt to "make the worse seem better and the better seem worse."

To what extent are our active-duty military officers fatalistically or supinely accepting this new orientation? Do they even hold their civilian masters to a high standard of definition about what they dare to call nation-building before they comply with the new mission, or honorably resign? The RAND study surely will not help our officers of discerning or inquiring intellect in that question.

Why should nation-building ever constitute a "core mission" for any deeply reflective military culture in the world, let alone for the U.S. military, which is already over-extended, linguistically unprepared, culturally and religiously undereducated, and exhausted by the tempo of its multifarious global operations? Even the GWOT, moreover, implies that we are making war against a method of warfare and not against a clearly specified enemy. (It is absurd to think that anyone could ever defeat "psychological warfare," for example. Yet terrorism is a form of psychological warfare.) Nor do we seem to have even a consistent "image of the enemy."

We should also ask why the RAND Corporation so disapprovingly calls the U.S. military's firm resistance to the new "core mission" of nation-building an "obstacle"—an obstacle

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to what? Are we to understand that this altogether rational and moral resistance to a disorienting "utopian deformation" is an obstacle to its further deconstruction as a military force? Or is it, rather, merely an obstacle to the U.S. military's further transformation into an imperial police force?

The study, however, expresses its satisfaction with President Bush's readiness to undertake the project of nation-building, which is a necessary element for an imperial state:

> In Iraq, the United States has taken on a task with a scope comparable to the transformational attempts still under way in Bosnia and Kosovo and [on] a scale comparable only to the earlier U.S. occupations of Germany and Japan. Nation-building, it appears, is the inescapable responsibility of the world's only superpower.

The first paragraph of the Executive Summary should further alert—and perhaps provoke—the attentive reader:

> The goal of the work documented here was to analyze and extract the best practices in nation-building from the post-World War II experiences of the United States. To do this, we examined U.S. and international military, political and economic activities in postconflict situations since World War II, identified the key determinants of the success of these operations in terms of democratization and the creation of vibrant economies, and drew implications for future U.S. nation-building operations.

Clearly, Iraq is the strategic focus. In fact, after Chapter Nine on "Lessons Learned" from history, the study's concluding chapter is a lengthy and unexpectedly sobering consideration of Iraq herself, especially her vulnerable geography and some of the other formidable barriers to any U.S. mission of "nation-building" there. But the treatment of the deeper religious factors is very poor, indeed—even dangerously shallow.

A second essay could be written on the RAND Corporation's two very superficial case studies of U.S. attempts at nation-building in Germany and Japan after World War II. For RAND's measures of the reality and essence of an historic nation are, indeed, insulting and embarrassing. "Democratizations" and "vibrant economies" simply will not do—especially with regard to Germany and Japan!

All those who know the actual history of the occupation and "reeducation" of Germany and Japan—and especially the distorting long-range effects on the "guilty" German nation and its youth—will be justly indignant. The young were made to feel ashamed essentially of all German history and culture, and their parents were often humiliated and prohibited from speaking of their own wartime griefs and terrors.

However, did the United States really build the German nation or the Japanese nation? Are such deeply formed cultures of long history ever to be "built" by "outsiders"? Can a slowly growing, well-rooted, and fruitful nation ever be "engineered," even by "insiders"?

What, indeed, is the substance of the historic culture of this purported "Iraqi nation" that we are now building? Was there ever such a thing? And is it in any way comparable to the continuity of the coherent (and unified) German or Japanese nations? What cultural substance is the United States now to draw upon, so as to conduct (or inflict) a new nation-building operation there? Or are we really talking about "democratization" and a "vibrant economy," once again? And how many years would it take to build even a slightly deeper "democratic political culture" in Iraq?

A nation is not a product to be engineered. Nor does a nation have a "modular" structure capable of being changed and rearranged in various artificial permutations. What does it really mean to "build" a nation, or even to reconstruct and reform a militarily defeated nation, especially a purposely humiliated nation? A nation grows slowly over time in and through its deeply shared experiences and vivid, living memories, even (and sometimes especially) memories of intimately shared sorrow and of tragic but heroic military defeats, as with the Serbs and Hungarians against the Turks.

What is the substance of the historic culture of this purported "Iraqi nation" that we are now building?

More generally, how does any foreign culture—especially an increasingly intrusive and very secularized culture such as that of the United States—"build a nation" during its military occupation of a religiously Muslim society? After a preemptive, supposedly "preventive" war of aggression (in defiance of current and long-standing international law), could any foreign "interventionist" armed forces really build a nation—even if it were linguistically competent and culturally sensitive, as well as religiously respectful?

It is important to remember that the United States of today is not at all the United States of 1945. This is still "Clinton's America," in the discerning moral sense conveyed by Joseph Sobran in *Hustler*, his book on the Clinton legacy. The United States is now so culturally Balkanized, and even religiously Lebanonized, and sufficiently decadent that she can now (contrary to Gen. Yehoshafat Harkabi's expectations in his 1988 book, *Israel's Fateful Hour*) be easily manipulated to become a more docile "proxy force," or "useful idiot," for the intelligently advancing grand strategy of Israel. Even those who are afraid to speak it openly know that this is so.

The U.S. military has effectively become an instrument for propagating the Clinton legacy abroad, often under the guise of progressive globalism or "transparent finance" or "economies without borders." This includes the whole ideology of rootless and restless neoliberal capitalism.

Well-rooted, just-minded, and far-sighted Americans (following the late James Burnham, the author of *The War We Are In*) should neither welcome nor tolerate these developments. Moreover, the moral and strategic resistance of our military officer corps to such destructive and self-destructive conduct (and its underlying policy and strategy) should intelligently and courageously grow, as part of the fulfillment of their oath of office, which constitutes a very high moral obligation, indeed. If the officer corps would take the time to read the RAND study carefully, they might well be awakened to what is being planned for them—and act.

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Is Ann Coulter Among the Prophets?

by Robert Stacy McCain

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

—Revelation 13:4

Godless: The Church of Liberalism
by Ann Coulter
New York: Crown Forum;
320 pp., $27.95

◆

Signs and omens have been everywhere this year. Amid wars and rumors of wars, one occasionally glimpses evidence that truth is now being revealed in ways that might astonish even battle-scarred veterans of the culture wars.

I knew the Apocalypse was upon us when I picked up Phyllis Chesler's *The Death of Feminism* and discovered that Chesler, bearing decades of liberal feminist credentials, had praised as "prophetic" Jean Raspail's *Camp of the Saints*. What next? Will we see Cornel West invoking Robert E. Lee? Or George Will paying tribute to M.E. Bradford?

Let him that hath understanding consider the significance when the latest best-seller by Ann Coulter—Sean Hannity's favorite TV guest—cites Joe Sobran. Like Raspail, Sobran is one of The Great Unmentionables, whose existence is not even to be acknowledged by respectable people in the conservative movement. Once you have been denounced as an Unpatriotic Conservative in the pages of *National Review*, your name disappears, with the resulting void serving as a warning to anyone else who might dare to offend the arbiters of conservative respectability.

Melanie Anderson

And yet, there it was, on page 201 of *Godless*, where Coulter recognizes Darwinism as "the creation myth" of the Church of Liberalism and refers to evolutionary cultists as "the Darwiniacs"—adding, "as author and columnist Joe Sobran calls them." Not content with that offense to the Straussian archons, Coulter thanks Sobran in her acknowledgements, numbering him among her "long-suffering, magnificent friends." Coulter has even gone out of her way to call attention to her thoughtcrime. On the day her book was released—June 6, 2006, making use of the number of the beast as a publicity stunt—Coulter paid tribute to Sobran in an interview published by *Human Events*, calling him a "magnificent writer" who had given her "the greatest advice a writer could ever get."

Coulter herself has survived banishment from *National Review* without suffering any discernible loss of popularity, and this survival evidently inspired in her an even-greater loathing of the pieties of political correctness. How else to explain her designation of Willie Horton as the "martyr" of the Church of Liberalism? She devotes a 17-page chapter to revisiting Horton's crimes, the Massachusetts prison furlough program that turned Horton loose, and the way in which Horton's furlough became an issue in the 1988 presidential election. Though Democratic-primary rival Al Gore was the first to use the Horton furlough against Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, Democrats did not begin shouting "racism" until Republicans followed suit.

No serious student of the 1988 presidential campaign has ever expressed doubt that the South Carolina-born Lee Atwater, campaign boss for George H.W. Bush, knew exactly what he was doing when he summoned forth the dark specter of Willie Horton. A murderer serving life without parole, Horton was furloughed as part of a program staunchly defended by Dukakis and other Massachusetts liberals. He then kidnapped and tortured a Maryland couple—pistol-whipped, bound, gagged, and sadistically tortured the man, then forced him to listen to his fiancée's screams as Horton repeatedly raped her. This incident would have been a scathing indictment of Dukakis's commitment to public safety whatever Horton's race, but because Horton was black, his crimes held a deeper symbolism.

The Willie Horton ads turned Dukakis's boast of being a "card-carrying member of the ACLU" into a fatal cam-

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Robert Stacy McCain is coauthor, with Lynn Vincent, of Donkey Cons: Sex, Crime, and Corruption in the Democratic Party *(Nelson Current).*

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paign liability. In reaction, Democrats accused Republicans of having appealed to primal racial fears of the sort that once inspired lynch mobs and made D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* the original Hollywood blockbuster. Republicans have spent nearly two decades denying this, and Coulter is not about to give liberals any satisfaction:

> Since none of their other defenses of Dukakis's furlough program were working, the Democrats reverted to their default argument: they accused Republicans of racism. This was consistent with author Peter Brimelow's definition of "racist" as "someone who is winning an argument with a liberal."

(See? There she goes again, bringing up the name of yet another conservative banished from polite society.)

I only wish that Coulter had acknowledged the extent to which the liberal criticisms were fair. One need not be a liberal to say that a black rapist represents a symbolic fear to many Americans, nor is it racist to question whether this symbolism is strictly irrational. Is it racist to admit into evidence Eldridge Cleaver's testimony about the implications of rape as "symbol" and "metaphor"? Yet Coulter, while boldly violating the Republican taboo against discussing the 1988 ads, still seems compelled to respect other taboos—or risk providing ammunition to those who regularly accuse her of fomenting hatred. Coulter clearly understands that, when liberals express a desire for honest, forthright "racial dialogue," what they actually mean is: *Shut up*.

The initial indignation over *Godless* had nothing to do with Willie Horton, however, but with Coulter's treatment of the "Jersey Girls"—the group of women widowed in the World Trade Center attacks who gained fame as prominent critics of the Bush administration. Coulter styles Kristen Breitweiser and her cohorts "the Witches of East Brunswick" and accuses them of deploying their grief for partisan gain after demanding over one million dollars in federal compensation for their loss:

> These self-obsessed women seemed genuinely unaware that 9/11 was an attack on our nation and acted as if the terrorist attacks happened only to them. The whole nation was wounded, all of our lives reduced. But they believed the entire country was required to marinate in their exquisite personal agony. Apparently, denouncing Bush was an important part of their closure process. These broads are millionaires, lionized on TV and in articles about them, reveling in their status as celebrities and stalked by grief-arazzis. I've never seen people enjoying their husbands' deaths so much.

Here, quite apart from partisan or ideological allegiances, can we all agree that Coulter has taken hyperbole entirely beyond defensible limits? As much as anyone might wish to criticize the publicity seeking and griefmongering of Breitweiser *et al.*, it is both cruel and false to say that they are "enjoying" the deaths of their spouses. In reading that offending sentence, I wondered how an editor could have failed to demand that it be recast, or why Coulter would have insisted it stand as written. Indefensible as argument, it makes sense only as a punch line. Its stark clarity is its only conceivable excuse, and I suspect that Coulter demanded that it be printed for the same reason that Lyndon Johnson once sought to accuse a Texas political foe of barnyard bestiality: "I just want to hear the S.O.B. deny it."

The usual "respectable" Republican types have joined many genuine conservatives in lamenting Coulter's penchant for such rhetorical abuses. Coulter is vulnerable to the charge of committing the same sins of which she accuses liberals. (Imagine her reaction if any liberal had accused Horton's rape victim of "enjoying" it.) Even if turnabout is fair play or if two wrongs could make a right, even if one might enjoy Coulter's high-wire act as a sort of showbiz spectacle, one might also wish that some friendly editor would take the time to talk her out of the most egregious of her excesses.

Yet that would spoil the fun of periodically turning on the television to see Coulter running rings around Matt Lauer or whatever other liberal spokesman has drawn the unenviable assignment of confronting her in a live interview. A lawyer by training, Coulter is quick-witted and tenacious, with a carefully honed knack for making liberal antagonists look foolish.

Thus with the "Jersey Girls." Coulter's attack on Breitweiser is part of a chapter in which she correctly points out that liberals have

> hit on an ingenious strategy: They would choose only messengers whom we're not allowed to respond to. That's why all Democratic spokesmen these days are sobbing, hysterical women. You can't respond to them because that would be questioning the authenticity of their suffering.

She includes in this category various individuals (Valerie Plame, Rep. John Murtha, Cindy Sheehan) whom she treats as examples of a single phenomenon:

> What crackpot argument can't be immunized by the Left's invocation of infallibility based on personal experience? . . . If these Democrat human shields have a point worth making, how about allowing it to be made by someone we're allowed to respond to?

That Coulter was criticizing the Oprahfication of politics was a point lost in the immediate uproar over her "Witches of East Brunswick" line. Her point will be understood better by the thousands who buy her books, among whom are many College Republicans who will seek to emulate her defiance of liberal sensibilities. This is why liberals so hate Coulter: If she can get rich by sarcastically denouncing the myths and martyrs of the liberal faith, she will inspire others to similar impiety, and liberals must dread that nightmare future when cable TV news is fully stocked with Ann Coulter wannabes, as talk radio is now dominated by Rush Limbaugh clones.

Most genuine conservatives probably do not relish a future in which political debate is conducted in one-liners, even if liberalism is the butt of the joke. And Coulter's enthusiasm for the war in Iraq will annoy those readers of Thucydides who understand that Nicias was right in opposing the Sicilian campaign, even if Alcibiades won the debate in Athens. Still, *Godless* has much to recommend it.

In her 20-page chapter on abortion—the "holiest sacrament" of the Church of Liberalism—Coulter is unrelenting. "No Republican is as crazily obsessed with any issue as the Democrats are with abortion," she observes, labeling them the "Abortion Party." Coulter anticipates that some will respond by point-

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ing to pro-life Democrats and is ready to show that these commitments are routinely discarded by Democrats with national ambitions:

> Showing the raw principle of the modern Democratic Party, among the Democrats who have abandoned pro-life positions to become pro-choice are former president Jimmy Carter, Senator Dick Durbin, former representative Richard Gephardt, Representative Dennis Kucinich, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and [former vice president] Al Gore. . . . It's easy to imagine a person going from being pro-abortion to anti-abortion based on new information—ultrasounds, medical advances, pictures of babies smiling in the womb. But it's hard to see how new information could produce the reverse conversion.

On abortion, Coulter thus takes her stand with one of the most influential, though least prestigious, of the Republican Party's constituencies, the Religious Right. Here again, she invites censure from the GOP elite, who scarcely conceal their embarrassment at their party's reliance on the votes of devout Catholics and hard-shell evangelical Protestants. And her proclivity for adding insult to injury is further evidenced when she concludes with three chapters (82 pages) attacking Darwinism.

Her critique of Darwinian evolution will offer few surprises to the reader who has followed the development of the Intelligence Design (ID) argument over the past two decades. Coulter acknowledges the assistance of ID's leading theorists (Michael Behe, David Berlinksi, and William Dembski) and also mentions Berkeley law professor Phillip E. Johnson, who has explored the philosophical terrain staked out by evolutionists. And, in the end, she presents the same argument, really, that Johnson made a decade ago in his book, *Reason in the Balance*. Johnson, however, is not a long-stemmed blonde with a caustic wit, nor does he have Sean Hannity's private number on speed-dial. Coulter's notoriety enables her to reach many thousands who would never read a Berkeley law professor's book, let alone anything by Joe Sobran or Peter Brimelow.

Conservative intellectuals may disdain Coulter as a shallow popularizer, but, so long as she's popularizing the right ideas, she is doing the Lord's work. She goes where angels fear to tread and seems to have been blessed with some mystical protection against the conservative establishment's desire to rid itself of inconvenient associations. The SPLC can scream all it wants about Coulter's friendships—in May, she wrote a column about immigration that cited *VDare.com*—and she'll just toss her blonde mane and laugh.

This apparent immunity to rebuke is enviable, as was noted *en passant* by Samuel Francis a few years before his death. Coulter had just got herself banished from *National Review Online* and had responded by calling Jonah Goldberg and Rich Lowry "girly boys." Noting a series of neocon attacks on Coulter in 2003, Francis dryly observed, "it may be that Miss Coulter kind of ODs on the hyperbole. I know the problem myself." Don't we all? But we cannot all be blue-eyed blondes, and, in the Age of Media, many must toil in thankless obscurity while a favored few reap fame and fortune.

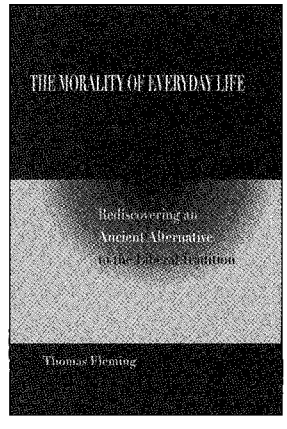
Rather than succumb to envy, however, we the obscure ought to count our blessings and remain steadfast in faith. For the signs indicate that the day is coming when "the first shall be last." ©

The Morality of Everyday Life:
Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.



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In a Savage World

by Thomas Fleming

Empty Bed Blues
by George Garrett
Columbia: University of Missouri Press; 179 pp., $19.95

◆

This latest volume of George Garrett's stories and sketches is proof that the old fox has not forgotten how to raid our American cultural henhouse without running away with a few plump chickens. *Chronicles* readers should not have to be told that Garrett, a long-time contributing editor to this magazine, is the master of several literary genres. In three books set in the early 17th century, *Death of a Fox*, *The Succession*, and *Entered From the Sun*, he practically reinvented the historical novel as a serious literary form, and, among his short fiction, there are tales of such perfection as Maupassant only dreamed of writing. As a teacher, he has inspired many serious writers across the country. Though Garrett is admittedly "getting on in years" and afflicted by maladies that only he can make seem funny, he has not lost his ability to surprise the reader into understanding.

George Garrett's fiction is marked by several characteristics. Most obviously, there is his fondness for multiple points of view and multiple voices, a technique that has influenced several disciples, such as Madison Smartt Bell. More successfully than the most avant-garde postmodernists, Garrett has been able to incorporate our omnipresent popular culture into his writing, without ever (or hardly ever) descending to the trivial level of New York brat-pack writers. He has even succeeded in adapting techniques of film, television, and documentaries, though readers should never forget that he is the author of perhaps the worst film scenario ever produced, *Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster*. (Garrett blames the movie on the producers' decision to mix two separate versions—one, deliberately funny; the other, only accidentally so. Every viewer will have to judge for himself.) In reading *The King of Babylon Shall Not Come Against You* (1998), I was struck not only by the pop-culture references but even more by the brilliant way he used a sequence of photographs to piece together a story. He might have taken a hint from Antonioni's film *Blow-up*, where solution of a murder mystery meant nothing, but, in Garrett's hands, the shuffling of photos gives us an insight into the fraudulence of public life.

These 15 stories illustrate the breadth of Garrett's range as a fiction writer. In the first or Prologue (a brief sketch of the type the author has honed in telling and retelling over the years), he recalls the "Independence Day" his family spent at the beach only to discover that the nice young men in the next-door cabin were John Dillinger and associates. One, "Ghost Me What's Holy Now," might have been an outtake from one of his Elizabethan novels, while in "Spilling the Beans: A Letter to Linda Evangelista," Garrett resurrects his infamous alter ego, John Towne, the "hero" (if you'll pardon the expression) of *Poison Pen*, a novel in the form of nasty and insinuating letters to famous people (*e.g.*, one by a "Mexican" asking LBJ to reward him for all the many times he and his dead relatives have voted in every election). The author gives the ungrateful Towne an opportunity to quarrel with him over the very premise of his *Poison Pen* letters: Garrett's "crackpot, cockeyed vision of America as a huge nation of celebrity lovers (starf--kers without portfolio or hope of redemption), peasants worshipping their sleazy lesser gods." He concedes to Miss Linda: "As a Godless people we need something to love and worship. In the absence of God (who has gone only He knows where), we are left with nothing but you people."

Garrett has almost infinite patience and kindness for the often sad people who populate his stories: an adolescent obsessed with pornography and a Jewish girl obsessed with his obsession; a reluctant Nazi saboteur who alerts Hoover to the plot but gets 30 years for his pains; a classic doofus in the Army who succeeds in getting himself killed as a hero. The saddest fate is reserved for a young girl being exploited by pornographers. The sheriff (progressive but corrupt) can trap the pornographers by illegal means, but no one can rescue the girl. The sheriff does not know what happened to her after her exploiters were driven out of town. "Moved out to the West Coast, I heard. Where she probably has resumed her movie career and is hoping to be discovered some day and to become the next Kim Basinger or Michelle Pfeiffer."

Or Linda Evangelista.

In a culture that adores celebrity-prostitutes, it is difficult even to mourn the destruction of innocence and the exploitation of children. Readers who have not experienced American popular culture (Amishmen over 70, for example) may not wish to confront Garrett's honest depiction of the harsh reality. The rest of us should heed the words of the narrator in "Gator Bait":

> We must teach and encourage our children to be deeply and sincerely cynical. Otherwise they will be lost victims in the savage world we have made and are giving over to them.
>
> Those who profess to be alarmed about the power and prevalence of cynicism in our time are really and truly (and maybe only) concerned that others will see through the pathetic shabby veils of their dedicated self-interest and self-aggrandizement.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles *and the author of* The Morality of Everyday Life.

Dawn Goes Down to Day

by Mark Royden Winchell

Nothing Gold Can Stay: A Memoir
by Walter Sullivan
Columbia: University of Missouri Press; 196 pp., $29.95

◆

Walter Sullivan entered Vanderbilt University in 1941 as an 18-year-old freshman. Two years later, he left during World War II to join the Marine Corps. He returned in 1946 to finish his degree in English and left again in 1947 to pursue an MFA at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where he studied with Robie Macauley and Paul Engle; became reacquainted with Andrew Lytle, John Crowe Ransom, and Robert Lowell; and first met the star of the fiction program—a brilliant young girl from Georgia named Flannery O'Connor. In 1949, Sullivan again returned to Vanderbilt, where he taught until his retirement in 2001.

Recalling the "hot June day" when he moved his last belongings out of his office, Sullivan writes:

> Most of what I knew I had learned

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here. Here, I had made most of my friendships that had endured through the years. If I had been leaving the same university, the same English department I had joined when I left Iowa, the separation would have weighed heavily on my heart. Now I felt as if I was leaving a strange and unfriendly land where every value I cherished was under assault.

In a way, Sullivan was lucky to have spent most of his career in a vocation that still maintained some semblance of cultural integrity. As a critic and fiction writer, he came at the end of the Southern Renascence, living on its accumulated capital and frequently eulogizing its demise. Even if he did not help to shape the tradition, he still lived on its patrimony. For those who have come after, the battle has been lost: The patrimony lives only in memory.

To overemphasize this melancholy ending, however, would be to distort a book that is largely a celebration of a good life and an affirmation of unfailing aesthetic and spiritual sanity. Part of the charm of this memoir lies in Sullivan's gift as a raconteur. Whether he is evoking his impoverished childhood in Nashville during the 1920's and 30's, his experiences as a young Marine, or his encounters with several generations of Southerners and Europeans, his narrative never falls below the level of engaged conversation. (This gift was even more evident in his 1988 book *Allen Tate: A Recollection*, which reads, at times, like inspired gossip.) To be sure, the interest is particularly high for those who already know and care about the personalities and the situations that Sullivan describes. Others might conclude that they have wandered into the wrong cocktail party.

One revealing incident occurred in 1990, when Sullivan was the target of a malicious reference in Kingsley Amis's autobiography. Amis had spent a year at Vanderbilt back in the mid-60's, before his reputation had been eclipsed by his son Martin. Beneath Kingsley's surface geniality, there apparently seethed a contempt for the provincial pretensions of the Nashville gentry. Amidst his peripherally snide references, Amis charged that Sullivan had once told a dinner party at his house that he "couldn't find it in his heart to give an A to a Jew or a Negro." Although it is virtually impossible to disprove such an accusation, not even Sullivan's political opponents believed it, and an examination of his grading practices showed no ethnic bias. Also, it was a line that had already been attributed to any number of other people. But such a charge, published by a once-famous writer, lives a life of its own beyond truth or falsehood.

One does not find this kind of backbiting and score settling in Sullivan's memoir. He is a man comfortable with his limitations, some of which have to do with the ironies of history. Not only did he buy into the Southern Renascence after it had begun its decline, he also got into Catholic literary modernism long after it had ceased to be a growth stock. Reared as nominal Methodists, he and his wife Jane became high-church Episcopalians as adults. In the late 60's and early 70's, Sullivan and two other colleagues in the Vanderbilt English department organized and directed the Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer. This attempt to protect the majesty of the traditional Anglican liturgy enjoyed widespread support everywhere in the church—except among those who actually made the decisions. In Minneapolis in 1976, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church radically transformed that venerable denomination by approving both a new prayer book and the ordination of women to the priesthood. Walter and Jane Sullivan promptly converted to the Church of Rome.

We see their deepening faith sustaining the Sullivans when, a few years later, their son John is rendered comatose by a car accident on an icy road near Columbus, Ohio. Although doctors gave John virtually no chance of recovery, he gradually regained consciousness. Still, there was the tricky proposition of removing him from Columbus to Nashville. An eight-hour trip by ambulance was deemed much too dangerous, as was a helicopter ride, with frequent ascents and descents. The only hope seemed to lie in securing an airplane.

It turned out that one of Sullivan's childhood playmates, now commander of the Tennessee National Guard, heard of his plight and put his own career at risk to help an old friend. The pages describing John's clandestine trip to the National Guard airstrip and departure for Nashville could have come from a very good mystery novel. We sense, however, that the entire healing process is an example of a mystery not dreamt of in John Le Carre's philosophy.

If John Sullivan's story has a happy ending, the same is not true of his father's memoir. Within a year or so of his retirement, Walter Sullivan had an apparently harmless lesion removed from the back of his neck. In November 2003, his doctor informed him that a subsequent X-ray revealed inoperable cancer in his lungs. He was given 8 to 14 months to live. The final chapter of this aptly titled book tells what it is like for a man of faith to live under sentence of death. The news of Sullivan's condition also casts a retrospective light on everything that has gone before.

At last report, Walter Sullivan had lived much longer than expected—through the first half of this year—but had finally taken a decisive turn for the worse. *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, which is surely his last book, is not only an arresting and finely crafted narrative but an act of personal courage. It is significant that a man who paid such homage to his predecessors should dedicate this last testament to "those who come after." May we be worthy of the legacy.

Mark Royden Winchell's latest book, Reinventing the South: Versions of a Literary Region, *was published by the University of Missouri Press last January. It is dedicated to Walter Sullivan.*

The Pitfalls of Ambiguity

by Leon T. Hadar

A Collision Course Over Taiwan: America's Coming War With China
by Ted Galen Carpenter
New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 224 pp., $26.95

◆

The conventional history of President George W. Bush's foreign policy has traced the ascendancy of the neoconservative ideologues in his administration to the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and the ensuing "War on Terror," the invasion of Iraq, and regime-change schemes in the Middle East. The common assumption among analysts is that, were it not for the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the White House's approach to the world would have followed the more traditional and realist stance adopted by

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former presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush. If it were not for September 11 (it is supposed), the neocons would not have been able to hijack U.S. foreign policy and reorient it toward its current global hegemonic direction. Most observers assume, moreover, that the foreign-policy hardliners in the Bush administration have focused much of their attention on the Middle East, a preoccupation that reflects their concerns with Israel's security as well as their obsession with Saddam Hussein and the mullahs in Tehran, and their long-term grand strategy of establishing a Pax Americana in the region. Yet the fact that the neoconservatives were emerging as leading players in devising and implementing President Bush's foreign policy was obvious well before September 11. It had nothing to do with Iraq, Iran, and the Middle East.

Rather, it was in shaping Washington's policies in East Asia, and toward China in particular, that the neocons demonstrated their willingness to challenge the policies of President Bush's predecessors. On April 1, 2001, an American EP-3 surveillance plane collided with a Chinese fighter while flying a mission over the South China Sea and was forced to make an emergency landing on China's Hainan Island. Both sides alleged that the other was at fault, and a nasty diplomatic spat ensued. The Chinese pilot had perished in the collision, and Beijing held the crew of the EP-3 for more than a week, until the State Department issued a statement expressing regret that the Chinese pilot had been killed and that the U.S. plane had been forced to enter Chinese airspace for an emergency landing. Although the statement was short of the formal apology that Beijing had been demanding, it successfully resolved the incident.

As Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute, recalls in *A Collision Course Over Taiwan: America's Coming War With China*, the incident provided an opportunity for the neoconservative ideologues inside and outside the administration to flex their political and bureaucratic muscles as they pressed the White House to adopt a more confrontational policy toward China regarding Taiwan, human rights, and other issues. Hence, Robert Kagan and William Kristol at the *Weekly Standard* charged that President Bush has presided over a "national humiliation," demonstrating a policy of "weakness and fear" regarding China, and urged him to change course. The two men and their allies in the White House, the Pentagon, and the many satellites of the neocon-controlled Ideas Industry in Washington insisted that the spy-plane incident showed that the United States and China were headed for a new global diplomatic and military clash, one not unlike the old Cold War with the Soviet Union, and that the American people and their leaders needed to mobilize their economic and military resources to prepare for the coming war.

Moreover, the neocons and the powerful pro-Taiwan lobby in the administration and on Capitol Hill insisted that the confrontation with China reflected major ideological differences between the two governments that would make it necessary to move gradually to overturn the policy, embraced by all U.S. presidents since Richard Nixon, according to which Washington sought both to preserve friendly ties with Beijing and to protect Taiwan's *de facto* independence. Developed during the 1980's and 90's, that policy incorporated the doctrine of "strategic ambiguity." "On one hand, Washington officially adheres to a one-China policy and does not dispute Beijing's contention that Taiwan was part of China," Carpenter explains. "On the other hand, the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act mandates that the United States sell defensive arms to Taiwan and regard any PRC effort to coerce Taiwan as a grave breach of peace." Left ambiguous was whether the United States would intervene with her own military forces in the event of a Chinese attack on the island. The rationale was that Taiwan "would have to wonder whether the United States would really come to its rescue if Taiwanese leaders needlessly provoked Beijing by pushing an independence agenda," Carpenter writes. Conversely, Beijing "would have to suspect that the United States would defend Taiwan." Hence, both sides would have an incentive to act cautiously. From the perspective of the neoconservatives and the Taiwan lobby, it was time to make the U.S. policy less ambiguous and to send a clear message to Beijing that, with regard to its confrontation with Taipei, the United States would provide all necessary political and military support for Taiwan, including direct military intervention if Taiwan were to be attacked by the Chinese.

Neither the Bush administration nor Congress has made a decision to take the giant step of abandoning strategic ambiguity regarding Taiwan. But the incident involving the American spy plane demonstrated, according to Carpenter, the risks posed by Washington's "zigzag" policy of trying to balance friendly relations with the PRC with its desire to shield a vibrant democracy in Taiwan. Facing mounting domestic pressures to toughen its stand toward China and strengthen its relationship with Taiwan in the aftermath of the spy-plane incident, the Bush administration announced its approval of the largest arms sale to Taiwan since 1992, and the President himself stated in a television interview that the United States has an obligation to defend Taiwan from a Chinese attack—an assertion perceived in Beijing as a dramatic departure from the previously "ambiguous" U.S. policy. In the context of the rising power of the pro-independence political parties in Taiwan, the apparent policy shift played into the hands of the hawkish members of the Chinese political and military leadership, causing relations between Beijing and Washington to deteriorate toward global confrontation. At that point, it might have been argued that Washington's China policy was being "hijacked" by the neocons and their allies in the hope that rising tensions with Beijing would create the global and domestic environment desired by those in Washington pressing for American hegemonic policies.

In this sense, "9/11" superseded "4/1" as the "War on Terror" and the burgeoning North Korea crisis created strong incentives to treat China with greater care. But Carpenter believes that this change in the American attitude could prove to be short-term. If anything, the rising sense of separatism in Taiwan and of expansive nationalism in China—coupled with the growing political strength of hardliners in Washington concerned not only for Taiwan but for issues of trade, technology exports, human rights, and nuclear proliferation—will make the White House's strategic ambiguity steadily more difficult to sustain. "The United States may be satisfied with the status quo, but the evidence is mounting that both Taipei and Beijing are increasingly dissatisfied," Carpenter argues. Taiwan lobbies for staunch U.S. support, even as she pursues initiatives that suggest that her ultimate goal is to win independence. Conversely, Beijing is growing more insistent that Washington rein in its Taiwanese client. "It has reached a point," Carpenter writes, "that Washington's admonitions to Beijing and Taipei to be cautious merely confuse, frustrate, and

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annoy the two capitals—and indeed the populations—on both sides of the Taiwan Strait." And, as the regional economic and political environment in East Asia is shifting rapidly to China's advantage, Beijing could "become bolder in challenging the U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan."

Carpenter's concern is that the zigzag policy on Taiwan could end in a strategic train wreck, a costly collision between the United States and China as imagined in a colorful and dramatic fashion in the first chapter, "2013: How the War Began." Like the events that led, in 1914, to the onset of World War I, the War of 2013 represents a classic case of multiple miscalculations. "Neither Beijing nor Washington thought that the other side would escalate the long-standing tensions over Taiwan to the point of armed conflict," Carpenter writes. "Yet armed conflict was the result, and the world has been paying the price ever since." The prospects for global peace and prosperity that looked so promising in the 1990's, following the end of the first Cold War, have turned into ashes. "U.S. policymakers have undoubtedly asked themselves many times whether the brief but intense war that broke out in July 2013 could have been avoided," Carpenter "recalls" after the conclusion of hostilities later in the year. "They probably have asked themselves at least as many times whether defending Taiwan was worth the price."

This last is precisely the question that Carpenter poses in 2006. His answer is a loud and clear "No!" But, unlike the proponents of what he calls the "accommodationist option"—that is, those in Washington who are willing to move toward revising strategic ambiguity by accommodating Beijing on the issue of Taiwan's political status and by discouraging the Taiwanese from pushing the envelope in their quest for independence—Carpenter insists that the Americans should leave the decision regarding independence to the Taiwanese themselves. Indeed, he believes that any effort to placate the Chinese short of foreswearing independence forever would be unlikely to satisfy Beijing and would invite just the sort of miscalculations that often lead to a major war. At the same time, the hawkish alternative to the neoconservative ideologues—who also want to erode the foundations of strategic ambiguity by adopting a confrontational stance toward Beijing over Taiwan and other issues—is not going to deter the Chinese from attacking Taiwan. The Chinese understand that, while Taiwan may have some importance for the United States, the Americans would not risk a major war that could include the use of nuclear weapons to defend Taiwan.

The Bush administration has adopted the worst possible combination of policies regarding Taiwan, Carpenter contends. On the one hand, the administration "is pressing a sister democracy from exercising some of its important democratic prerogatives," while, on the other, it has been stressing its promise to protect Taiwan's security. "Although it is imprudent for the United States to pledge to defend Taiwan, it is equally inappropriate for Washington to tell Taiwan what its policies ought to be." Rather than risk going to war to defend Taiwan or kowtowing to Beijing over Taiwan's political status, Washington should adopt an entirely different approach. It should, Carpenter argues, state that the United States takes no position on the question of Taiwan's independence, but, at the same time, make it clear that we have no obligation to defend an independent Taiwan. According to Carpenter, a policy of arms sales to Taiwan—but no security guarantee—is an approach that would "respect Taiwan's dignity as a democratic society while limiting America's risk exposure" and making it less likely that the United States and China will find themselves on a collision course over the future of Taiwan.

Leon T. Hadar is the former New York correspondent for the Jerusalem Post *and the author of* Quagmire: America in the Middle East.

Total War

by Christopher Check

A City Laid Waste: The Capture, Sack, and Destruction of the City of Columbia
by William Gilmore Simms
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press; 133 pp., $24.95

◆

Eight years ago, I sat in the home of Nashville artist Jack Kershaw, drinking whiskey from a Jefferson cup and listening to the story of the burning of Columbia, South Carolina (February 17-18, 1865). Mr. Kershaw pointed to the various scenes in his terrifying painting of the fire: In the center, a drunken Yankee plays a piano that his fellow soldiers have dragged into the street and set aflame. In one corner, an Ursuline nun consoles a crying child as they watch their convent and school burn. In another, a Yankee soldier takes an ax to the hose of the Columbia volunteer fire brigade as they hopelessly struggle to put out the blaze. Citizens lose their pocket watches to Yankee robbers. Homes are invaded and looted, and, along with silver and china, Negro women are carried off by their Yankee liberators. Some survive their humiliation; others are left dead. All around, the city burns—hell come to earth. Above the pandemonium, almost grinning with approval, float the ghastly visages of General Sherman and President Lincoln.

Since that afternoon in Jack Kershaw's parlor, the sack of Columbia has, for me, represented the horrifying extremes to which soldiers in the service of a Jacobin cause will go. For the technological advancements that converged in the mid-18th century, and for the Union's practice of unrestricted warfare, the War Between the States has often been called the first modern war and Sherman, the consummate modern general. The groundwork for modern warfare, however, was laid more than half a century earlier. Across the ocean, in France, "liberty, equality, and fraternity" fired the *levée en masse*, bringing an end to the 150 years of limited war born at the Peace of Westphalia and informed by the theories of Hugo Grotius. "Restricted war," wrote Italian political theorist Guglielmo Ferrero in 1933,

> was one of the loftiest achievements of the 18th Century. It . . . can only survive in an aristocratic civilization. We are no longer capable of it. It is one of the fine things we have lost as a result of the French Revolution.

Unrestricted war, or "total war," is identified not only by the brutality of its action and the innocence of its victims but by the passions that drive it. On this side of the Atlantic, "liberty, equality, and fraternity" appeared as "all men are created equal," "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," and "preserving the Union." These unexamined nostrums justified (and continue to do so in the minds of many) General Sherman's taking "the war to the people." Today,

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thanks to the courageous and determined work of two men a century and a half apart, William Gilmore Simms and Prof. David Aiken of the Citadel, we can know in painful detail what "taking the war to the people" meant for the citizens of Columbia, South Carolina.

A City Laid Waste includes a 46-page Introduction by Aiken, followed by the complete text of Simms' original newspaper account of the sack. "Already an internationally known author," as Aiken tells it, Simms arrived in Columbia just days before the event. His account is that not only of an eyewitness but of a newspaper editor who spent the weeks immediately following the fire interviewing hundreds of other eyewitnesses and drawing up an extensive catalogue of the damage. His efforts were serialized as "The Capture, Sack, and Destruction of the City of Columbia," in ten consecutive issues of the appropriately titled *Columbia Phoenix*, a newspaper that Simms himself started "so that our sons may always remember, and the whole Christian world everywhere may read."

Starting the *Phoenix*, Aiken explains, was an heroic undertaking. Not a man "to sit in silence when there was a big story to be told," Simms was "in his element whenever he turned his attention to the business of creating a newspaper." A lesser man would have looked on the devastation with despair. Simms saw a duty to tell the story. All of Columbia's printing presses had been smashed, and paper and ink were, because of the war, already in short supply. While Simms' partner, Julian Selby, combed war-ravaged South Carolina for a press, Simms began collecting eyewitness accounts of the sack. Within a month of the fire, the first issue of the *Phoenix* went to press. On April 10, 1865, the final installment ran. After the war, Simms reissued the account as a pamphlet, tempering some of his rhetoric—or "responding" as Aiken reports, "to the newly imposed economic, cultural, and political dependency of the South." Aiken's handsome and carefully annotated edition is the first time the original *Phoenix* account has been in print since the serial run.

History is fortunate that Simms moved so quickly to publish. Aiken tells of the suppression of freedom of the press under Lincoln in the North (and in occupied New Orleans under Union general Benjamin "Beast" Butler). Simms had but a brief window between the departure of the Union forces from Columbia and the return of the occupying government, after which publishing the story might have been impossible.

Simms' account hit a nerve, and Aiken exposes the errors in subsequent Yankee efforts to discredit it. It is small wonder that such efforts were made. Simms' account is a primary-source document providing abundant evidence of Union war crimes: a fire deliberately set at an agreed signal in over 20 locations that resulted in the destruction of three fifths of the city; widespread looting and burning of private homes; destruction of personal libraries and art collections; wanton destruction of memorabilia collections (photos and personal treasures dear only to their owners and of no military value whatsoever); a woman in labor dragged into the street; mourners at a wake turned out into the street; killing of family pets in the sight of small children; pillaging of Negro quarters; rape and murder of Negro women; the burning of a Roman Catholic convent and its adjacent girls' school; the desecration of sacred vessels used in Mass.

Simms' account is worth the price of the book. Aiken's Introduction makes it indispensable for anyone seeking a better understanding of the war and its attendant wickedness. The Introduction includes an excellent biographical sketch of Simms, beginning with his ancestors who, as Simms put it, "took a distinct part on the patriotic side" in America's War for Independence. His father served as a volunteer under Andrew Jackson, fighting Creeks and Seminoles and at the Battle of New Orleans, subsisting for weeks on nothing but the meat of his dead horse, a story that greatly impressed Simms as a boy. Aiken's account of the tragedies that befell Simms himself reminds us that the lives of great writers make good stories: risk taking, success, loss, and suffering. Simms lost his first wife, Anna, to tuberculosis and his second wife, Chevillete, to acute appendicitis. Anna bore him one child; Chevillete, 15; but only six in all lived to maturity.

Where Aiken's work proves most valuable is in giving us the backstory that Simms' newspaper account would not have provided. Now we can appreciate the gravity of Sherman's war crimes—and lay to rest any doubt about his culpability. By describing the beauty and culture that thrived in Columbia before Union troops burned it to the ground, Aiken clarifies our understanding of the loss. A city of only 8,000, Columbia boasted magnificent public and private libraries, art collections featuring the work of European masters, an architectural heritage that included the work of James Hoban and Robert Mills, extensive ornamental gardens, and wide boulevards lined with magnolias, oaks, and chinaberries.

And Columbia was a center of learning. Two military academies trained young men. The South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute and the Columbia Female Academy educated young ladies. South Carolina College was among the best institutions of higher learning in the republic and a leading center of scientific research as well.

In contrast to the Puritan North, Columbia was, as Aiken points out, a center of religious freedom. Believers from five Protestant denominations and Roman Catholics built churches in Columbia. There was a Hebrew Benevolent Society. The Catholic Church also built the Ursuline Convent and girls' academy that housed and taught 200 young women and boasted 17 pianos. The mother superior of the convent was the sister of one of the Catholic Church's strongest defenders of the Confederacy, Bishop Patrick J. Lynch.

For no other reason, perhaps, than their having seen *Gone With the Wind*, many Americans know of the burning of Atlanta. Far fewer know of Columbia's fate. If I could have asked for something more from Aiken's Introduction, it would have been a comparison of the two events. Atlanta was an industrial and railway center, besieged, ordered evacuated, and then burned. Columbia, as Aiken explains, was a cultural jewel. The city was surrendered on terms. If there was any military justification for the torching of Atlanta (and I am not saying that there was), such did not exist in the case of Columbia, making the destruction of that city an even greater moral offense.

Aiken begins his acknowledgments by comparing his research of more than a decade on Simms with the planting of mint. It began innocently enough, but he was soon overtaken by it. Would that word of this volume spread with the same vigor. One obvious good effect would be some much-needed correction of the record on the War Between the States. It might also help inspire a reluctance to send our armies forth in the service of global democracy to wreak equivalent destruction on foreign cities and peoples.

Christopher Check is the executive vice president of The Rockford Institute.

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by Aaron D. Wolf

For Zion's Sake

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace," declares the LORD, through his prophet Isaiah, "and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." So great is God's provision for His people that even "the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory . . ."

Now, I know what you're thinking: *This prophecy is being fulfilled before our very eyes! All hail the blinding brightness of Barbra Streisand, Dustin Hoffman, and Goldie Hawn! Behold, God is blessing His people in these Last Days, raising their profile among the Gentiles!*

OK, perhaps you didn't interpret the text that way, but at least one goy does. John Hagee, pastor of the nondenominational Cornerstone Church of San Antonio, with "more than 18,000 active members," has made support for the modern state of Israel the chief expression of his faith: You can find it in his church's doctrinal statement, sandwiched between "Water Baptism" and "The Priesthood of the Believer": "We believe in the promise of Genesis 12:3 regarding the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. We believe that this is an eternal covenant between God and the seed of Abraham to which God is faithful." Under Hagee's leadership, the church has donated tens of millions of dollars to assist Jews in moving from Russia (Gog) to Israel.

Hagee has written dozens of books on the imperative of Christian financial and political support for Israel, including 1998's *Final Dawn Over Jerusalem*, in which he states that the long list of Jewish entertainers flourishing in America is an indication that God is pouring out His blessings on His people. Hagee's latest, *Jerusalem Countdown*, reveals the life of a "pastor" who must have some sort of teleporting device in order to maintain his affairs in Jerusalem and Washington while shepherding the flock of 18,000 in San Antonio: "I was invited to Washington DC to meet with Condoleezza Rice and other national leaders concerning this Roadmap," he writes. "When I asked about Jerusalem, this was the answer I received: 'Jerusalem is so controversial. It is so sensitive that it's not even on the table for discussion.'" With all due respect to Condi Rice, "[L]et's put Jerusalem on the table," he retorts, because, with no due respect to Saint Augustine, "Jerusalem is the City of God." Furthermore, "[g]iving up Gaza, then the West Bank, and then Jerusalem . . . clearly violates the Word of God."

In addition to his "private" and "frank" conversations with Benjamin Netanyahu, Hagee has sources in Israeli intelligence, and one of them has secret-squirreled to him that Iran will soon have the capacity to launch long-range nuclear weapons at New York City. The Iranians are in cahoots with the Russians, who are seeking to unite the Islamofascists against Israel and the United States. And here, "sources" and FOX News headlines fade into Armageddonian inevitability, as he reminds us that "Ezekiel's war as described in chapters 38 and 39 will consist of an Arab coalition of nations led by Russia for the purpose of exterminating the Jews of Israel and controlling the city of Jerusalem."

Armed with this knowledge, last spring, Hagee created what NPR's Guy Raz called "the first Christian political-action committee dedicated entirely to supporting the state of Israel." Besides chairman Hagee, Christians United for Israel (CUFI) includes such big names in the evangelical world as Gary Bauer and Jerry Falwell. Together with 3,400 delegates, they descended upon Washington in mid-July for their inaugural meeting, even as the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah was escalating dramatically. In attendance were Israeli ambassador Daniel Ayalon, GOP chairman Ken Mehlman, and senators Rick Santorum and Sam Brownback. As reported by *Israpundit.com*, greetings were read by President Bush ("G-d bless and stand by the people of Israel and G-d bless the United States") and Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, who commended CUFI's "bold stand at this crisis time" on behalf of the land that is Israel's "birthright."

Citing Isaiah 62, Hagee, in his keynote address, urged Christians to refuse to remain silent for Zion's sake. To do so would provoke the wrath of "Almighty God, Who is watching." On the other hand, "think about our name: 'Christians United.' . . . A rabbi from Nazareth, Jesus Christ, prayed, 'Father, that they may be one.' Tonight, we have become one . . . for Israel."

Ultimately, then, Christian Zionism has accomplished what popes, reformers, and councils could not: a reunification of "Christian-dom," as Hagee put it. Unconditional support for Israel is the sacrament around which we unite, and the victim is a border people—the residents of southern Lebanon and northern Israel—whose sacrifice is a small price to pay for the political aspirations of zealots in Jerusalem, Washington, and San Antonio.

Of Isaiah 62, one Syrian Christian had a different interpretation: "Let us prove ourselves worthy of that name which we have received," wrote Ignatius of Antioch at the close of the first century. "For whosoever is called by any other name besides this, he is not of God." How could any people—even those who produce countless Grammy and Oscar winners—be considered heirs to the promise of Isaiah 62 who "has not received the prophecy which speaks thus concerning us: 'The people shall be called by a new name, which the Lord shall name them, and shall be a holy people'"? "This," Saint Ignatius continues, "was first fulfilled in Syria; for 'the disciples were called Christians at Antioch.'"

In his great zeal for "Zion," Hagee has asserted (to some mild controversy) that Israelis who faithfully practice Judaism receive the grace of God just the same as Christians. Yet, continuing his epistle, Saint Ignatius counters that "It is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end. For where there is Christianity there cannot be Judaism." Not even the "Christian AIPAC," as Hagee calls it, can substitute for a Faith centered on the Incarnate One, "for Christ is one, in whom every nation that believes, and every tongue that confesses, is gathered unto God." ◁

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by Scott P. Richert

Shades of Blue

The Rockford Public Schools, as long-time readers of *Chronicles* know, have seen more than their fair share of troubles. With the end, in June 2002, of the 13-year-long desegregation suit and its accompanying rule by the federal courts, and the hiring of Dennis Thompson as superintendent in 2004, however, the school board has begun to get the district's financial house in order—although next year's $300 million budget for just under 28,000 students can hardly be called a model of fiscal restraint. Still, the district is now running a budget surplus and chipping away at decades of accumulated debt. This November, voters will be asked to renew a hefty tax levy, passed in 2002, to keep the district moving in the right direction.

Which makes now a rather bad time for bad press, from the district's standpoint. So the headline of *Rockford Register Star* political editor Chuck Sweeny's June 20 column, "What's the Hidden Meaning in Da Warrior Code?" must have caused some consternation down at district headquarters.

The closing of Rockford's West High School in the late 1980's prompted the desegregation lawsuit, and, in the fallout, the school was ultimately reopened as West Middle School. This year, West held a "rites of passage" ceremony—one of those pseudograduations that parents have come to demand and that those teachers and administrators who are more concerned with building up "self-esteem" than with actually educating are all-too-eager to stage. At the ceremony, every child was issued a certificate, which is where Chuck's story descends into the bizarre:

> The document repeated "Rites of Passage," followed by this:
> "That's what I think of the New Earth are all about [*sic*]. I think they are here to change it, they are here to change it through their giftedness, then they will change it through their power, their ability to destroy, and tear down." It ends with the date, "May 30, 2006," and "Leslie Smith . . . Principal."
> . . . [W]e read this paragraph over and over, trying to glean hidden meaning. Was there a secret instruction intended by the use of the words "destroy" and "tear down?" Were there words missing in the first sentence? What is the New Earth? Hmmm. Had Mary Magdalene been posing as a West student?

The rest of Chuck's column details his Tom Hanks-like attempts to find out what the quotation means. Along the way, he gathers some choice remarks from the school district's attorney, Steve Katz:

> "That document is indecipherable. It's impossible to understand what that thing says. As soon as he saw it, the superintendent was alarmed. . . . The first thing that strikes you is what the hell does this mean? There's no way you can understand it," Katz said.
> Superintendent Dennis Thompson spoke with Smith and was "satisfied that there's nothing dark, menacing or worrisome intended. It supposedly was represented as a quote from another source, and words got dropped in the transposition [*sic*]. That begs the question, who proofread it?" Katz said.

No, actually, it raises more important questions: What did the original quotation say, and where did it come from? A little Googling around, and I quickly discovered the answer to the first question:

> That's what I think these Children of the New Earth are all about. I think they are here to change our world because our world needs changing. And if we don't let them change it through their giftedness, then they'll change it through their power, their ability to destroy and tear down.

Since the complete quotation is hardly less disturbing than the mangled version (though perhaps slightly less violent), Superintendent Thompson might want a fuller explanation from Principal Smith. Many—indeed, most—of the parents of the eighth-graders at West would likely find this passage worrisome, particularly once they find out more about the author, G.W. Hardin.

The text is from Hardin's book *Indigo Rising: Awakening the Powers of the Children of the New Earth*. A p.r. webpage can be found at *AtTheThreshold.com*. There, Hardin offers excerpts from the book, under the heading "Seven rules for ritual in rites of passage":

> 1. Help the boy or girl find an Elder or Wise Man/Woman in whom there can be trust. . . . These Elders should have experience in the sacred or the spiritual, and they should be able to put that experience to use through ritual.
> 2. Include your spouse in the planning stages. If you are a single mother, strongly consider bringing in a male who knows and loves your daughter to help with the planning. Single fathers, strongly consider bringing in a mother figure. In such cases, you may wish to have a series of rituals rather than a single major ritual, spanning a couple of years . . .

This is clearly New Age religion, at best; thus, it's not surprising to read, on Hardin's bio page for *Indigo Rising*, that:

> NEW YORK TIMES bestselling author, G.W. Hardin is the author of THE DAYS OF WONDER and co-author of two other books: THE MESSENGERS, which hit bestselling lists all over the country for three months, and ON THE WINGS OF HEAVEN, a true story of angelic messages for humanity. As a successful software engi-

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neer with one of the top computer companies in the world, Hardin thought he had it made . . . until he contracted an incurable disease in 1983, which ended his high-tech career. For four years he scavenged the medical world for help before being diagnosed with a disease which would ravage his skin for the rest of his life. Or so modern medicine thought. . . . Hardin subjected himself to hypnosis where the therapist simply asked for the cause of the disease, thus prompting his first angelic experience. It was the angel who told him his purpose in life and how he had evaded that purpose. And on completion of the angelic visit, the author was completely cured.

The "Indigo Children" are not Hardin's creation; as with the angel craze, he's simply jumping on a bandwagon that had reached such popular outlets as ABC's *Good Morning America* by November 2005 and has roots as far back as the writings of Edgar Cayce. Even more disturbing than Hardin's New Age beliefs, however, is the not-so-subtle sexual cast of his "Seven rules for ritual in rites of passage," considering that Principal Smith was introducing this text to eighth-graders. Again, a glance at Hardin's bio reveals more than we might wish to know:

> He has been a featured speaker at professional gatherings and at colleges and universities, lecturing on topics ranging from the "Seven Gifts of Heaven for Humanity" to "The Role of Angels in the Modern World" to "The Sacred Power of Being Gay."

And here's one of those "angelic messages for humanity" from Hardin's book *On the Wings of Heaven*:

> As long as humankind has walked the earth, there have been people who are gay—perfect, whole and complete just the way they are. You see, the more a religion gets accepted, the more self-righteous it becomes in good-versus-evil. When outside forces begin to let up, pressure begins building from within for conformity, beginning with the smallest number of members who act differently or think differently from the majority. The religion's actions become no better than those of its earlier persecutors. However, their persecution is now done in the name of God or Jesus or the Bible.

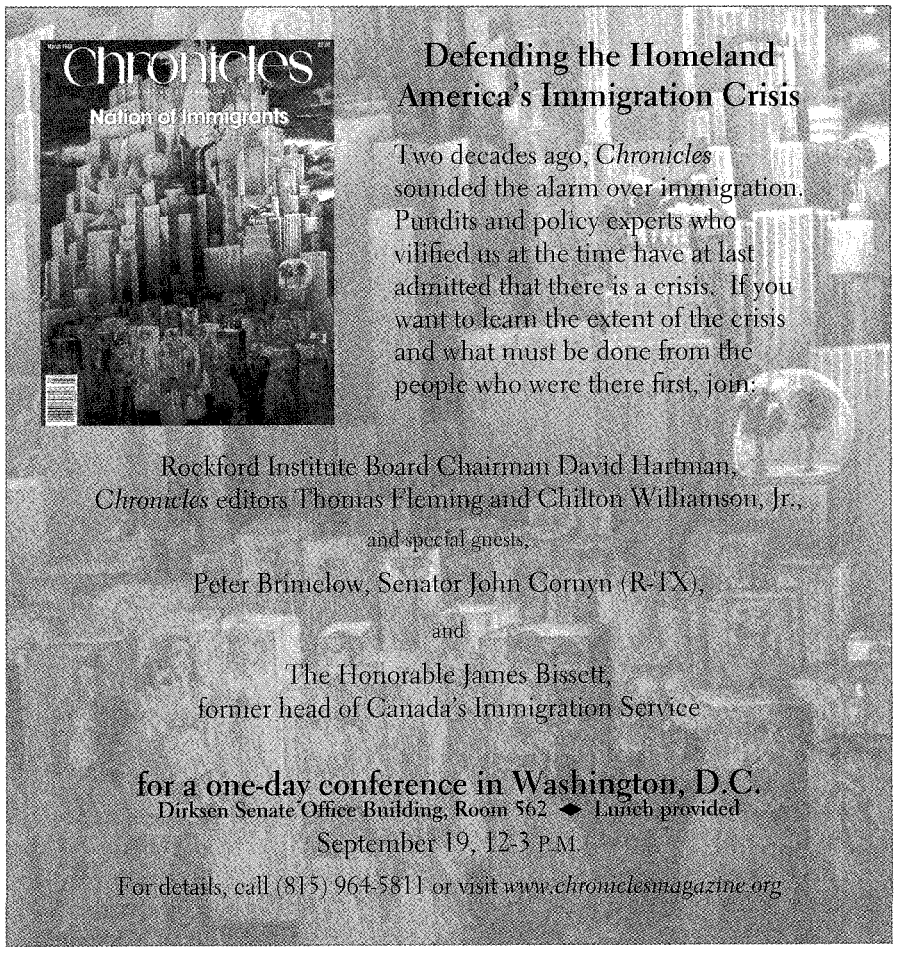
And there's much more out there, such as Hardin's disturbing interview in the May 2000 issue of the defunct homosexual publication *OutSpoken* (*missoula.bigsky.net/outspokn/05-2000/warren.htm*) with lesbian activist Patricia Nell Warren about her work with "queer (GLBT) teens."

No matter what one's religious beliefs or views on homosexuality, it should be clear to everyone involved that Principal Smith had no business distributing this passage to eighth-grade students in a public school. School-board member Mike Williams agrees—though, he told me, he also suspects that the mangling of the quotation on the certificate was intentional. "I think the grammatical errors were not actually so, but truly meant to mask the real message. I agree . . . that parents would be very upset if they know the context of this encrypted quotation." Williams has provided the full quotation and information on G.W. Hardin to the other members of the school board and the district administration. So far, the response has been muted. In a district this size, board members are far too disconnected from students and parents.

Whether anything will come of Williams' concern is uncertain. Leslie Smith has made a point of working with troubled black youth, especially boys, even going so far as to become a foster father for one. (Smith is black himself.) And, as Chuck Sweeny noted in his column,

> Smith had already been re-assigned to a new job when the Rites of Passage ceremony took place. He won't be back at West Middle School. His new posting is dean of students at Guilford High School.

Given the influence that Smith would have on impressionable high-school students, Superintendent Thompson might want to reconsider that posting. At the very least, he will undoubtedly want to discuss the writings of G.W. Hardin at length with Principal Smith, to determine how closely they reflect Smith's own vision of youth today. A misstep now might be very costly for the school district come Election Day. ◁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Letter From Arizona

by Tim Sifert

Tax Credits and Education Reform: No Simple Task

◆

Over the last decade, the state of Arizona has made ground-breaking attempts at K-12 education reform. A 1997 law allowing taxpayers to steer a portion of their state income-tax liability toward a student at a private school now provides significant scholarship aid each year to 22,500 of the 54,000 students enrolled in private schools. With over one million of Arizona's students still in public schools, however, the results of the movement are difficult to measure.

Incorporated by the state and regulated by the federal government's 501(c)3 tax-exemption rules, School Tuition Organizations (STOs) have thrived and multiplied into a battalion of 54 organized nonprofit businesses in less than a decade. Unlike vouchers or government subsidies for low-income families, privately run nonprofit STOs solicit their own donors, rather than rely on a handout from the state. Before they can fund a single child's scholarship, they have to persuade individual donors to make a significant contribution and to take a credit on next year's taxes, which is no simple task.

What began in 1997 as a $500 tax credit has now grown to a maximum of $1,000 per year, which a taxpayer can donate to the organization of his choice, then take as a dollar-for-dollar credit against his state income-tax liability. (Arizonans have five years to apply the credit to their state tax bill.) In 2005, almost 70,000 taxpayers made donations, but, with almost 2.5 million individual income-tax returns filed statewide, that represents fewer than three percent of taxpayers. There's plenty of room to grow.

By law, each STO must turn at least 90 percent of the funds it collects into scholarships for students. Beyond that, STOs market themselves in a variety of ways—from need-based scholarships to those based on a student's academic merit (regardless of family income) to any combination of community service or academic criteria. And most, if not every, private school has now either contracted with an STO or created its own. That marriage of fundraising, fund distributing, and the delivery of benefits to the schools and their families has created an economically and politically powerful group of tax-credit advocates. And like all advocacy groups, they have a desire to protect their entitlement—for their own schools, their own children, and their own tax dollars.

This, in turn, creates an atmosphere of accountability for the ultimate disposition of the funds. It also boosts efficiency, because the donation does not pass through the state treasury. STOs are actually private corporations governed by a board of directors, often parents or grandparents who are likely to have been active in the school-choice movement.

Most STOs allow the donor to recommend that a scholarship recipient be some deserving student at a particular school. Some even allow a donor to recommend an individual student by name, as long as he is not the donor's dependent. In fact, if a donor wants his donation to be used for Native Americans, single-parent families, or families with a large number of children, there are a number of organizations that are happy to fulfill his wish. Rather than creating an unnecessary layer of government-regulated administrative bureaucracy, the law actually stimulates competition among organizations for each donor.

Naturally, among the first institutions to market the tax credit and create STOs were the Catholic schools in the dioceses of Phoenix and Tucson and multiple-campus religious schools. These professional educators already had an enterprise in place to take advantage of the opportunity to finance their students' tuition bills. This was an instant financial boost to those organizations that were funding scholarships based on need. Now, pastors and principals no longer have to distribute a limited amount of tuition waivers to poor families, and bishops need not redistribute income from wealthy parish schools to poor ones. Families need only to apply to the STO, submit a financial statement and tax return, and receive an award based on objective financial need.

Next in line came the more esoteric private schools, including homeschooling co-op groups who simply turned to their handful of existing parents for donations, essentially turning their own tax dollars into scholarships for their own children.

Overall, however, after nearly a decade, the private-school market has not yet responded to the new money coming in from STOs. The money has gone not to help build new private schools but to fund tuition for students already in private-school classrooms. In fact, few private schools in the Phoenix area even have openings for new students. That's partly the result of the introduction of charter schools, which receive state funds for operational needs but need to beg or borrow for capital and classroom space.

One factor that may explain the lackluster effects of the STOs is Arizona's record-setting population growth over the last ten years. Students are not moving from school to school, because there are enough students being imported to satiate all the schools, public or private. Even with Arizona's annual population growth rate of 3.5 percent for the last decade, few private schools have built new classroom space or opened new campuses. Moreover, many schools just raised their tuition costs to respond to the supply of students and parents who are now able to pay a little more for tuition, thanks to the extra help from STOs. Some schools explain to parents who balk at the increase that they should simply apply for scholarships and encourage others to make tax-credit donations to fund them.

When the income-tax-credit law was passed, there seemed to be as many different reasons given to support it as there were legislators who voted for it. Overall, there were five: It would help some poor kids to gain access to private schools; it would help middle-class parents better afford a better education; it would create a larger supply of students competing to attend private schools; it would pressure public schools to be more competitive; and it would provide a just way to reimburse parents for putting their children in private schools that would not burden the taxpayers. Having watched this particular legislative process, I am amazed that courts try to intuit and interpret "legislative intent" when deciding the application of the law.

Nonetheless, the tax-credit policy has

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survived numerous lawsuits and a substantive challenge before the U.S. Supreme Court. These victories have emboldened supporters, who have begun chasing additional targets through the state legislature. Up for reelection, besieged Gov. Janet Napolitano reluctantly signed into law this spring the second generation of tuition tax credits: a corporate-income-tax credit modeled after the tax credit for individuals. Though crippled by a ten-million-dollar annual cap, a five-year sunset clause, and restrictions that require the funds to be distributed to low-income families, this new scholarship vehicle also carries an interesting requirement: The funds can only be used for "switchers"—students moving from public schools to private ones. The signing concession from the governor may have been a Pyrrhic victory, because it came at the price of new spending to create statewide all-day kindergarten in public schools. To many families, the change may mean nothing more than new state-subsidized daycare. But to those families wrestling with the decision to send their children to private school, it may push them back toward the marginally more economical public school.

While it may not be the intended effect of the legislation, an entrepreneurial private school can now take advantage of the dedicated revenue stream from the second-generation tax credit to build new classrooms, filling them with students from any number of nearby public schools.

The original tuition tax-credit program still has not come close to meeting the demand for scholarships for existing students in private schools. On average, private-school tuition in Arizona is $4,000, while the scholarship based on the tax credit is only $1,400. Only when that demand is met, or when the fruits of the corporate-income-tax-credit policy are handed to those switching from public to private school, will the enrollment numbers of private schools increase.

How high will private-school tuition go, as a result of the taxpayer-funded increase in potential customers? Government-run schools in Arizona now spend $8,500 per child on physical construction and actual operations combined; private schools spend half of that amount. Legal mandates, unions that pay teachers the same wage regardless of performance, and bureaucratic nonparent regulators are always going to keep public-school costs above those of private schools.

Still, even if no public-school student ever switches to a private school, the scholarships based on the tuition tax credit will help dull the financial pain felt by private-school parents. However, dulling the financial pain could also dull the motivation of parents to regulate their child's school. If a private education becomes nearly free, will parents who had been responsible for the success of their children in school now be afraid to look the gift horse in the mouth?

In 2005, the total amount of scholarships paid by 54 STOs was $31 million. That is but a grain of sand on the beach when half of the ten-billion-dollar state budget is spent on K-12 public education. But that grain of sand is a foreign object in the eye of a typical advocate for public-school spending in Arizona, who is irritated by the fact that private-school success is diminishing the effectiveness of their demands for more public-school funding, less accountability to parents and taxpayers, and greater authority over the education of children in the state of Arizona. For that alone, it may be worth the hassle.

Tim Sifert was the chief speechwriter for former Arizona governor Fife Symington.

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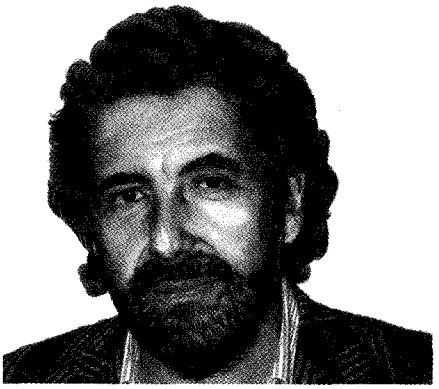
by Andrei Navrozov

Sex and Poverty



The poor smelled, and there was nothing to be done about it. "Middle-class people believe that the working class are dirty," George Orwell recalled, "and, what is worse, that they are somehow inherently dirty." His childhood nightmare was having to drink from a vessel touched by the lips of a presumed social inferior.

I had never known that kind of handicap. I felt quite at home in seedier, seamier company than would suit most people I knew. Dirt did not bother me in the slightest. Very likely, a socialist would credit the environment into which I had been born—a Moscow literary milieu that was allowed the privilege of following the precepts of an aristocratic culture leveled half a century earlier—for the fact that, even as an adult, I could go for weeks without a bath, that I did not feel the need to trim my toenails or to cut my hair, and that, to this day, it would not occur to me to mind about drinking from somebody else's beer mug, even if the somebody in question had neither teeth nor a title. The aristocracy in Russia, insulated from the front-lawn barbecue of bourgeois attitudes by the veranda glass of autarchic backwardness for much longer in the day than its counterparts in Britain and elsewhere on the Continent, did not feel that the lower classes smelled. It was the middle classes that smelled, and it was precisely this olfactory disturbance that social barriers, though rendered ever more permeable by historically known events, had been raised to keep down. If the peasant girl smelled like anything in Tolstoy, it was freshly churned butter, or wild strawberries, or, at worst, laundry starch. And if the streetwalker in Dostoyevsky was ever dirty, she was bound to be cleaner than any of her clients.

I had never used a fish knife in the 48 years just recently computed. I did not mind whether the bottle on the table held whisky, vodka, or cognac. I left neither core nor seed when I ate an apple or a pear, and the heavenly Beatrice, *l'Amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle*, of my life had been a prostitute who was working flats when we met, only a grade or two above streetwalker in the hierarchy of vice in turn-of-the-century London. Evidence of this kind, I felt, made me an exception among the exceptions, these last belonging to the category of educated, well-adjusted, and otherwise normal people set apart from the rest by their unwillingness to work—that is, to earn a living in any conventional sense.

Orwell, who is ever on my mind as the model of what a man of letters can achieve if only he quarrels with all his friends, was actually quite a prolific writer. Perhaps industry, like squeamishness, had been, from the start, a part of his class-conditioning. Yet in the end, he overcame this too, and became cognizant of the absurdity, first remarked upon by Mark Twain for the edification of an earlier generation, of positing any formal distinction between work and play:

> Is it work to dig, to carpenter, to plant trees, to fell trees, to ride, to fish, to hunt, to feed chickens, to play the piano, to take photographs, to build a house, to cook, to sew, to trim hats, to mend motor bicycles? All of these things are work to somebody, and all of them are play to somebody.

Hence, when I speak of earning a living in any conventional sense, I skirt over the whole issue. The narrow category of people I refer to as the exceptions may be said to be engaged in lifelong play simply on the basis of their income-tax returns, in that, whether they take photographs or feed chickens, none of them has ever earned very much money doing it.

So, in a world peopled by ants, I saw myself as the maverick grasshopper. It may be remembered that the emotional pintle upon which the plot of Somerset Maugham's novel *The Razor's Edge* turns is the hero's refusal to get a proper job—or, at any rate, a job his fiancée would deem proper enough for him, and his decision to go east, there to drink green tea with turbaned charlatans and to assert his individuality in a myriad other ways irritating to her and deeply puzzling to their social circle. But, as grasshoppers go, Maugham's nonconformist seems to have been something of a Johnny-come-lately. The largest sum I earned as a writer—less than what I would later stake at roulette in a single evening—was the modest advance from a kind publisher for an autobiography I had written while in my 30's. There are different ways in which people want to please, or at least not to disappoint, their peers, their parents, and the women they hope to marry one day.

Vaudeville, which, unlike literature, is concerned with rules rather than exceptions within the human ant heap, would have us believe that there are two invariant types of man vying at any one moment for the hand of every desirable woman. One is the broadly positive, respectable type, a gentleman through and through, or so he seems, a model of the usual bourgeois virtues. Usually, he is the one with a somber necktie on weekdays and a cabled crewneck on weekends, the one who kisses the girl good night on the doorstep, the one who meets with her parents' approval; and it is no coincidence that he is in full-time employment. He lives like the rest. The other type is the handsome bounder, who emerges as an abrasive dreamer, an abusive hankerer after the higher truths, a transvaluer of values with an apparent tendency to self-destruction. His manner is direct; his dress, proletarian; and it is no coincidence that, like Maugham's Larry, he is jobless. He lives, you see, on the razor's edge.

The dark horse of the vaudeville naysayer turns out to be a winner and in the end gets the trophy, while his rival, the vaudeville gentleman—weak, cowardly, hidebound—is edged off his pedestal of eligibility by the exigencies of plot to which he is often comically unequal. But, as I said, insofar as it hopes to decipher even the lowest and most trifling truths of life, literature must break away from vaudeville and draw on the exceptions. And my observation of this very lifelike and real triangle suggests that, of the two men vying for the hand of the desirable woman, neither is typically in full-time employment. If anything, the woman is. ◁

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by Srdja Trifkovic

An Undesirable Independence

Given the wars and rumors of war from North Korea to the Middle East, the last thing America needs is to reignite the proverbial powder keg in the Balkans, a region that has been fairly stable for the better part of this decade, especially when compared to the bloody 1990's. That precarious stability could be undermined by the stated intention of some U.S. officials to support the independence of the southern Serbian province of Kosovo.

Occupied by NATO and administered by the United Nations since June 1999, Kosovo is by far the worst-governed part of Europe (Albania and Bosnia included). Christians are routinely terrorized by the Albanian Muslim majority in the province. Nearly 90 percent of non-Albanians have been ethnically cleansed, and some 150 churches destroyed, over the past seven years. Much of the nominal and most of the real power is in the grasp of Hashim Thaci, Agim Ceku, and Ramush Haradinaj, a scandalous troika of war criminals, drug traffickers, and jihadists who run Kosovo as a criminal fiefdom. And yet the proponents of Kosovo's independent statehood continue pretending that the province is as ready for independence as Slovakia or Estonia were 15 years ago. They insist that the "international community" merely needs to settle on the exact formula for independence, after which Serbia must sign on the dotted line. During a visit to Belgrade in the last week of July, the U.S. envoy, Frank Wisner, told Serbian prime minister Vojislav Kostunica privately that independence "in some form" is "unavoidable." In the weeks and months preceding his visit, many "Balkan experts" all over the West joined the chorus and claimed that, by the end of 2006, it would be a done deal.

There are signs, however, that this outcome is by no means inevitable. The shift did not seem likely when the United Nations abandoned its own policy of "standards before status" a year ago. The achievement of "standards"—measured in terms of non-Albanians' personal security and the return of non-Albanian refugees, whose numbers exceed a quarter of a million—only required a pretense of ethnic and religious tolerance on the part of the Albanians, but they refused to offer even that much. The negotiations in Vienna over Kosovo's future status are doomed to fail: The Albanians will settle for nothing less than independence, and that is the only issue on which Belgrade will not budge.

Serbia's refusal to do more than grant the highest level of autonomy possible to Kosovo signals neither intransigence nor a foolhardy lack of realism. It reflects the fact that Russia and China are having second thoughts on toeing the Western line at the U.N. Security Council, which is the only body qualified to proclaim nations legally sovereign. As a Russian-affairs commentator told me, Putin once toyed with the notion of accepting Kosovo's independence in return for the West agreeing to a similar status for Russia's own enclaves:

> Abkhazia, Trans-Dniester and South Ossetia have much better cases for independence than "Kosova." . . . [I]t's not hypocritical for Russia to be against "Kosova" independence while supporting it for these enclaves.

China, by contrast, is well aware of the danger that Kosovo's precedent could be used to her disadvantage in Taiwan, Tibet, Sinkiang, even Manchuria. Beijing will likely follow Russia on Kosovo's future, albeit for different reasons.

No less significant than the shift in Moscow and Beijing is the fact that Kosovo's appalling reality is finally becoming better known to the Western world. Writing in the *American Spectator* ("Blind Eyes Over Kosovo," July 20) after a recent visit to Kosovo, Doug Bandow provides a comprehensive account of Albanian violence and the duplicity of international Gauleiters. Any Serb who travels outside of a few remaining enclaves does so at his own peril, and, at the quasiborder between Serbia and Kosovo, drivers routinely replace their Serbian license plates to disguise their identities:

> Even foreigners are at risk. Some British tourists recently were roughed up and their car was destroyed because the vehicle had been rented in Belgrade. Had they been Serbian their lives probably would have been forfeited. More than 900 Serbs have been murdered since the allies took control and ethnic killings continue in the territory. But you will look long and hard to find an ethnic Albanian jailed for committing the crimes . . . [T]he behavior of Washington and NATO has been truly disgraceful. . . . [T]he allies have presided over one of the largest episodes of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans.

The explosion of organized crime, including sex trafficking, Bandow adds, goes hand-in-hand with the rise of radical Islam. This is evident in the more than 200 mosques that have been built since 1999, some of which unashamedly fly the Saudi Arabian flag. Bandow concludes, "Kosovo is less ready for independence today, based on its commitment to a multi-ethnic republic with human rights guarantees, than when it was 'liberated' in 1999":

> A top U.S. official told me that he figures not a Serb will remain within five or ten years after independence, or even the status quo. That is, granting Kosovo independence means completing the process of ethnic cleansing that started seven years ago. Worse, since the West has been in charge, granting independence means ratifying the very process that the allies went to war to prevent. In order to get around this rather embarrassing dilemma, Western governments are talking about conditional independence, that is, independence only after ethnic Albanians meet certain

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standards. Perhaps proponents of this perspective are so naive as to verge on the delusional; more likely, they are cynically maneuvering to get out of Kosovo with a minimum of public embarrassment.

Bandow argues that there is still time to get away from the brink, a view shared by the former Canadian ambassador to Belgrade, James Bissett. Writing in the *Washington Times* (July 11), he warned that granting independence to Kosovo would violate the principle of states' territorial integrity enshrined in the U.N. Charter:

> U.S. violation of this principle would have far-reaching implications for the very framework of international peace and security. Independence for Kosovo also would create a criminal and terrorist state in the heart of the Balkans . . . [It] would set a precedent for other aspiring ethnic groups for independent status and would destabilize not only the Balkans, but many other parts of the world. It also would mark a low point in U.S. foreign policy. It is difficult to be held up as the champion of the rule of law, of democracy and the global war on terror, while at the same time giving support to war criminals and terrorists.

Julia Gorin wrote in the same spirit in the *Jewish World Review* (July 26), noting "the fact that the Kosovo Liberation Army whom we fought for had trained with al-Qaeda." And yet,

> Kosovo's war criminal Prime Minister Agim Ceku, who is responsible for more than 600 deaths during the terror wars against Serbia, was received [in July] as an honored guest by Condi Rice. Richard Holbrooke gets awards for his work in implementing a racist state run by mob rule, without individual rights, property rights, safety of life and limb, or rule of law—a shining precedent for the rest of the world that any ethnic group can carve off a piece of a country once that group reaches a critical mass in any given city, state or province . . . When Kosovo becomes "Kosova" later this year with our blessing, and we help deliver the Balkan borders of Hitler's vision, it will spell our own doom. While standing firm in the Middle East, the Bush administration embraces defeat in Europe, and extends the caliphate that the Clinton administration jump-started.

In a *Baltimore Sun* op-ed a few weeks earlier, Christopher Deliso reminded us that averting a humanitarian catastrophe was NATO's justification for bombing Serbia, but then came ethnic cleansing of Serbs and other minorities by Albanian militants. Investigations implicating Albanian politicians or their associates were routinely blocked:

> The orders came directly from Washington, London and Brussels. Mr. Ceku and Mr. Haradinaj control Kosovo's militant factions and are considered heroes by Albanians. An anxious United Nations continually has sought to stay on their good side through appeasement.

Alarmingly, Deliso concludes, the West has no Plan B for ensuring peace: "In early 1999, Kosovo was a brutal but contained local conflict, relegated to villages. Botched Western intervention has made it a potential precedent for multi-regional warfare."

Even if cleansed of the remaining Serbs, Kosovo would not be a grateful friend of the United States. As Adm. James Lyons warned in the *Washington Times*, the drug, sex-slave, and weapons trades would continue flourishing—but none of this should come as any surprise in view of the KLA's well-established record of criminality. If Kosovo becomes independent, Lyons concludes, even the minimal interference in the Kosovo-based gangs' operations will be removed:

> A criminal state not seen since the defunct Taliban regime in Afghanistan will be set up with easy proximity to the rest of Europe. Such an outcome would make a mockery of some of the United States' most important global security priorities. While the international community desires some sort of "closure" to the ongoing mess in Kosovo (and this is understandable), it is hard to think of a supposed solution worse than independence. Seven years after the 1999 war, this is one Clinton legacy that demands urgent reconsideration.

These and other authors have generated a heightened American awareness that an independent Kosovo, forcibly and illegally detached from Serbia, would be harmful to U.S. national interests and to European and global security. Seven years after the 1999 war, the KLA criminal-jihadist structure dominates the province's administration and maintains a reign of terror over Kosovo's still-dwindling Christian Serb population. Churches and monasteries that have not already been desecrated, blown up, or burned by mobs of Muslim Albanians exist under tenuous protection from NATO. And yet, as the newly founded American Council for Kosovo pointed out in its introductory statement,

> elements of the international community—including some sectors of the U.S. government and important voices in Congress—have accepted the idea that the only "solution" for Kosovo is to detach it formally from Serbia and to make it an independent state. This would mean officially handing power to the criminal and jihad terrorist KLA leadership, who would then be empowered as a "sovereign" government.

On the bright side, it is worth remembering that the U.S. policy in the Balkans is not cast in stone. The dominant modalities of the "resolution" in Kosovo have acquired an explicitly Clintonesque flavor only in the second half of 2005, most notably with the return of Nicholas Burns to center stage at the State Department. Never a paragon of principled consistency, Condoleezza Rice, his nominal boss, has internalized the views of Mr. Burns and other Albright protégés like him on what needs to be done in Kosovo and Bosnia. She has come to favor a Balkan strategy that is hardly different from that advocated by candidate John Kerry in 2004, but that strategy has never been subjected to serious scrutiny within an administration that has far bigger fish to fry elsewhere. As recent developments indicate, things are not nearly as bleak for the opponents of independence as that strain of the "international community"—embodied in the Soros-funded International Crisis Group and Mr. Burns—wants them to believe, or as the decisionmakers in Belgrade are often cajoled into believing. ©

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FOREIGN POLICY

Neocons, Naxalites, and National Demise

by Joseph E. Fallon

The neoconservatives have promoted an aggressive U.S. foreign policy that they term "benevolent global hegemony." In other words, they demand, to paraphrase Pat Buchanan, "an empire, not a republic."

What makes the American Empire an unprecedented historical phenomenon—the one instance in which the creed of American Exceptionalism holds true—is that the U.S. government, unlike previous imperial powers, seeks to acquire and maintain an empire from which it derives no economic benefits. In fact, not only is our pursuit of world empire shredding the Constitution (as well as countless lives), it is bankrupting the country.

By the end of 2005, the national debt had grown to $8.1 trillion, or 64.7 percent of GDP. That is nearly six times the amount of currency in circulation. Forty-four percent of that debt was held by foreigners. Of that, 64 percent was held by central banks. Since September 30, 2005, the debt has been increasing at the rate of approximately two billion dollars per day. On a *per capita* basis, it has now reached $28,000. What has been the response of Congress? Reduce spending? Increase taxes? No. In March 2006, it raised the legal debt ceiling to nine trillion dollars to allow for even more government borrowing.

The deficit for 2005 was $726 billion, or 5.8 percent of GDP. In "Does the Widening U.S. Trade Deficit Pose a Threat to the Economy?" Frank Shostak of the Mises Institute writes that,

> As a result of the ballooning deficit, the value of U.S. net external liabilities, expressed at historical cost, jumped to $5.1 trillion in 2005 from $4.3 trillion in 2004. As a percentage of GDP, net external liabilities climbed to 41% in 2005 from 37% in the previous year and 4.9% in 1980.

The Office of Management and Budget reports that the U.S. federal budget for fiscal year 2007 is $2.251 trillion. Of this amount, $1.102 trillion—49 percent—is allocated to the military. The breakdown is as follows: current military, $563 billion; past military (veterans' benefits and financing past wars through loans, savings bonds, *etc.*), $439 billion; and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, an estimated $100 billion. (In *The Economic Costs of the Iraq War: An Appraisal Three Years After the Beginning of the Conflict*, however, Joseph E. Stiglitz of Columbia University and Linda Bilmes of Harvard project that the true cost of the Iraq war alone will exceed one trillion dollars.)

If the debt and deficit are not reduced, which is unlikely, since President Bush has asserted that his "War on Terror" will continue into the foreseeable future, the financial practices of the U.S. government may appear to many investors, particularly foreign investors, as a Ponzi scheme. If that perception takes hold, the currency will weaken as foreigners fearing an economic crisis become less willing to invest in U.S. dollars. To continue to attract foreign investment, the Federal Reserve would then have to raise interest rates, perhaps significantly, which could provoke a major recession.

War is one tactic employed by the neocons in their quest for global empire; trade is another. And their "free-trade" policy is hollowing out the U.S. economy, which is already suffering from 25 years of deindustrialization as companies relocate their plants to Mexico and (then) Asia, outsourcing U.S. jobs overseas. It is the greatest transfer of wealth in history—from America to Asia.

If current trends continue, Forrester Research, an information-technology consulting firm, expects the number of U.S. jobs outsourced to jump from 400,000 in 2004 to 3.3 million per year by 2015. And it is not just manufacturing and service jobs that are being outsourced. Technology-related jobs, such as "software development, customer service, accounting, back-office support, product development and other white collar endeavors," are also being sent overseas. According to a study by the University of California, Berkeley, approximately 14 million Americans working as "financial analysts, medical technicians, paralegals, and computer and math professionals could reasonably be considered 'at risk'" for having their jobs outsourced, while Deloitte Consulting anticipates that three quarters of America's leading financial institutions will eventually outsource their jobs, with India a prime destination.

Over half of the Fortune 500 companies are already outsourcing jobs. These include American Express, Chase, Dell, Delta Airlines, Hewlett-Packard, HSBC, J.P. Morgan, and Oracle. And, according to a *CNET News.com* and Harris Interactive poll, over 40 percent of U.S. technology executives are willing to pay higher taxes to prevent the U.S. government from prohibiting outsourcing. Outsourcing is too profitable to U.S. companies for them to allow it to be terminated, no matter how damaging it is to U.S. workers. As former U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky remarked, "We used to think that displaced workers, given new training, could move up the value chain. There is now a question about whether that upward movement will be possible."

The profitability of outsourcing is principally derived from differences in salaries and regulations. First, companies often pay foreign workers a fraction of the American wage. For instance, in 2002, the U.S. salary for a software programmer was $66,100; in India, it was $10,000. A mechanical engineer in the United States earned $55,600; in India, $5,900. Here, an IT manager received $55,000; there, $8,500. An accountant earned $41,000 in America, but only $5,000 in India. And financial operations paid $37,625 in the United States, but only $5,500 in India.

Second, companies' foreign operations are not subject to U.S. laws on pollution, employment practices, workplace conditions, minimum wage, maximum work hours per week, sick days, child labor, safety standards, healthcare, unemployment compensation, and pensions.

Thus, many U.S. businesses benefit from the American Empire, even though the government and citizens of the United States do not. But what about India, an aspiring world power, a junior partner in the U.S. War on Terror, and a beneficiary of U.S. outsourcing?

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India sees an alliance with the United States as a way to advance her national interests, including recognition as a nuclear power. New Delhi speaks of a "strategic partnership" with Washington, as reflected in the "New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship" and the "US-India Global Democracy Initiative" to "promote stability, democracy, prosperity and peace throughout the world." In return for this cooperation, Washington plans "to help India become a major world power in the 21st century," to serve as a counterweight to China.

Integral to this "strategic partnership" is the establishment of a CEO forum of Indian and American business leaders to promote trade and investment in India, which includes promoting the outsourcing of U.S. jobs to India. In its desire to benefit financially from America's empire, the Indian government is blind to domestic repercussions.

India is a land of two extremes locked in a timeless cold war that is now turning hot: the rich, literate, "progressive" urban centers *versus* the poor, illiterate, "traditional" countryside. The former hold political and economic power, but they are outnumbered, surrounded, infiltrated, and, ultimately, at the mercy of the latter should they revolt.

In the 1970's, this environment produced Maoists—called Naxalites after the city of their origin, Naxalbari in West Bengal—who sought a "people's war" of the countryside against the cities. The initial insurgency failed; outsourcing, however, has brought it back to life with a vengeance.

In conjunction with New Delhi's policy of economic liberalization, outsourcing has generated tremendous economic growth in India. With a GDP growth rate exceeding eight percent in 2005, and anticipated to continue apace for the near future, India is the second-fastest growing major economy in the world.

This growth, however, has amplified the disparity in incomes and expectations within cities, between the cities and the countryside, and among the regions. For instance, the disparity in growth rates between what are termed the forward and the backward Indian states rose from 0.3 percent to 3.3 percent. And 106 million people, roughly ten percent of the population, are unemployed. Seventy-five percent live in the countryside. Corruption, disaffection, and alienation have set in.

As a result, within 18 months, the Naxalite insurgency extended its sphere of influence from 76 districts in nine states in 2003 to 156 districts in 13 states by 2005—one quarter of India's territory.

The "Red Corridor" they established linking their "liberated zones" in India with Maoist-controlled territory in Nepal is being expanded into a north-south and east-west corridor spanning all of India. According to Ranjit Kumar Gupta, a former police commissioner of Kolkata who fought Naxalites in the 1970's, a coordinated attack from the Red Corridor could break the country in half, leading to Naxalite "control over huge deposits of minerals, oils, and industrialised territory." The question now is not "if" but "when" it will occur.

There is irony in all this—ex-Trotskyites, American neocons, promoting international capitalism; the flourishing of international capitalism in India fostering the growth of the ultraleftist Naxalites. And there is tragedy. The empire cannot be sustained. Like the god Cronus, it devours its children. It is bankrupting the United States and unraveling India. The former is facing economic implosion; the latter, social explosion.

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.

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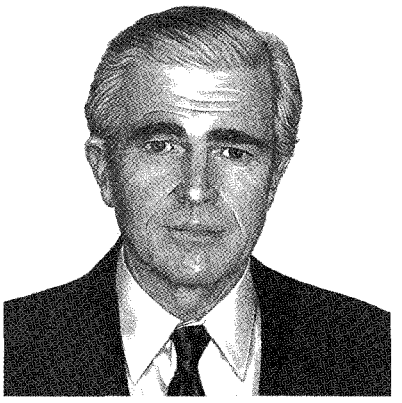
by George McCartney

Super Savior



Superman Returns

Produced and distributed by Warner Brothers Pictures
Directed by Bryan Singer
Screenplay by Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris

The American Civil Liberties Union's executive officers must be on vacation somewhere off the telecommunications grid. This supposition occurred to me as I watched Bryan Singer's *Superman Returns*. Although the film takes off the wraps and reveals the Man of Steel to be none other than Jesus Christ in tights, the ACLU has not filed a single lawsuit to protect the young from witnessing such a muscular portrayal of saviorhood. The usually vigilant atheists, I concluded, must be out of touch.

Return makes no bones about its Christ symbolism. It announces it loudly, repeatedly, and unapologetically throughout its entire two hours and thirty-four minutes. So much so, I began to wonder if it were a ploy to gain greater audience share. Could this be Hollywood's cynical response to Mel Gibson's passionate lesson? Even before the opening credits have run their swollen course, we hear Marlon Brando, playing Jor-El, Superman's biological father, declaiming his son's salvific mission on Earth in the plummy accent he used 44 years ago as Fletcher Christian in *Mutiny on the Bounty*. (Brando appears courtesy of bits remastered from his performance in the 1978 *Superman: The Movie*.) His accent may not ring true to the starchy elocution of the Oxbridge elite, but no one can dispute its spot-on rendition of Kryptonian English. "For this above all," Brando mumbles hieratically, if confusedly, "their capacity for good, I have sent them you, my only son." He adds for good measure, "The son becomes the father, and the father becomes the son," a sentiment that will be repeated by his own son in the movie's closing moments. Sounds almost Trinitarian to me, although the Spirit seems to have gone missing.

Next, we see Krypton's favorite son hurtling through the heavens in a ball of flaming crystal. He has been away from Earth for five years searching for his Kryptonian roots. Having discovered there's nothing left of his birth planet, he is on his way back to his foster home and his foster mother in Smallville, Kansas. After crawling battered and weak from the wreckage of his space capsule, he falls into the arms of Ma Kent, who comforts him in a Pietà pose. Singer really knows how to soften up his audience. Not only does his Superman suffer in a Christ-like manner, his mom is Eva Marie Saint, who comforted another Christ figure 52 years ago playing Brando's girlfriend in *On the Waterfront*. It was she who inspired Brando's Terry Malloy to embark on his own Via Dolorosa as the man willing to sacrifice himself on behalf of his fellow longshoremen.

Superman has come back resigned to live as an alien among his beloved earthlings, including his especially beloved Lois Lane. Miss Lane, however, is no longer so lovable. So angry was she with her Kryptonian, she went out and snagged herself a Pulitzer in his absence, writing an article entitled, "Why the World Doesn't Need Superman." Talk about burning your undies! Miss Lane has also acquired a son, now four years old, whose paternity is a trifle obscure despite her live-in boyfriend, the dapper *Daily Planet* editor, and, wouldn't you know, nephew of the gruff but adorable editor in chief, Perry White.

Attempting a reconciliation of sorts with Lois, Superman in his Clark Kent disguise tries to explain why his alter ego flew away without so much as a farewell cape flap. Maybe, Clark suggests, the big lug's feelings were so deep that he did not know how to express them. Lois frostily dismisses this bespectacled observation, declaring that neither Superman's absence nor his return concerns her. This, after Supe has just saved her, along with 30 or so other journalists, from disaster in an airliner nose-diving into Yankee Stadium. Later, appearing as himself, Superman takes her in his arms for a flight into the heavens, where he gently chastises her for her churlish article. "You wrote the world doesn't need a savior, but everyday I hear people crying for one." It is an odd explanation for having taken a half-decade powder, but, then, Superman stories have always been gloriously illogical. What he seems to mean is this: *Though I'm in love with you, Honey, there's a world of hurt to deal with down there, and I've got to be taking care of business*. And take care he does in a montage of rescues and crime stopping round the globe that set newscasters wondering if he is traveling faster than the speed of light. Of course he is: He's Superman. This raises a question, however: With such quickness, you would think that he would be able to fit Lois in on the side. But, no, this Kryptonian is entirely honorable (except, of course, for that five-year disappearing act). He will not trifle with her affections nor interfere with her new—although, as yet, unhallowed—relationship. Such heroic selflessness has become preciously rare in commercial films, and I confess to being absurdly touched by it.

Once Supe had finished this installment's round of adventures and flown off into the starry night, I questioned my initial assumption about the ACLU's inaction. Maybe the litigious activists were being crafty. They may have determined that, should they sue, their case might well be thrown out of court on grounds of frivolous typology. While Singer has glaringly loaded up on Christian imagery, his film echoes the Nietzschean *Übermensch* as often as it does the Nazarene Carpenter. True, the new Supe, Brandon Routh, takes a passionate beating at the hands of an extravagantly evil Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey in manic overdrive), and he strikes a gallery of handsome cruciform poses, but he is also heralded by chords swiped from the Richard Strauss symphonic ode to Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, so memorably invoked in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). On his flights in-

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to outer space, Routh even witnesses the chiaroscuro majesty of Kubrick's planets, their luminous crescents glistening portentously in the interplanetary sunlight. Then, after heaving a particularly noxious chunk of Krypton-laced landscape into the heavens, he drifts helplessly back to earth, arms outstretched, head turned aside as resignedly as any Renaissance Jesus on the cross. But, as he enters Earth's atmosphere, he curls into a fetal position to make his final descent, musically laved by a keening chorus recalling the astral Christ-like arias in *2001*. Singer doubtlessly wants his Superman to resemble also Kubrick's reborn astronaut, the Odyssean David Bowman, floating through the ether at the conclusion of *2001*, seemingly on a mission to renew the face of the earth. So Superman is at once Christian and classical. The problem is that his two aspects do not really align.

The original Superman story was created as a wish-fulfillment fantasy by two Jewish adolescents, Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel, in the Midwest in the 1930's and probably reflects their feelings of ordinary teenage shyness and their special anxiety about discrimination at home and in Europe. As the gauche Clark Kent, their hero was ignored by entitled WASPs who were blinded to his heroic abilities. These surfaced only in times of emergency, and then only after a clandestine change of clothes in a phone booth. Singer has freighted this juvenile fantasy with all the *mythos* he could purloin from the Hebraic, Hellenic, and Christian traditions. But even the Man of Steel cannot bear such a burden comfortably. Shuster and Siegel may or may not have intended the biblical and classical echoes many commentators purport to see in their comic book, but they never took their character with the high symbolic seriousness on display in *Return*. Not that I am against such symbolism. My favorite movies center on Christ figures: *The Third Man*, *Shane*, and *On the Waterfront*, to name but three. It is just that Superman is paradoxically too close and too far from the story of Christ.

In the canonical narrative, Superman comes to Earth from the heavens and is brought up by foster parents who are simple farmers. Sometime in his late 20's, he leaves the farm and moves to the city, where he embarks on a never-ending quest to save people. You can see some parallels to Christ's life in this, but they are as rudimentary as the artwork of the early Superman comic books.

On the other hand, the name Superman implies that he is the *Übermensch*, a higher being who transcends human limitations. He is, in short, a god, as Lex Luthor correctly notes with considerable asperity in Singer's movie. But this kind of deity has nothing to do with Jesus. The point about the Incarnation is precisely that Jesus was as human as you and I, subject to all the pain and limitation the flesh is heir to. He was the Suffering Servant Who demonstrated that, as humans, we could stand up to whatever life dished out, including death itself, provided we embrace His exhortation to surrender our self-involvement. For the faithful, this is what makes human fate bearable. Our belief in the coming Resurrection is not a reprieve from suffering; it is, rather, a guarantee that our inevitable travail will not be in vain. Christ did not come to save us from crime and natural disasters, from colliding cars and rheumatoid arthritis. He came to remind us that we have a covenant with the cosmic source of all meaning. If we honor our side of the contract, we will participate in the divine purpose of creation. Superman, by contrast, is a hero who makes emergency rescues. He cannot be surpassed when it comes to catching falling planes, putting out underground fires, and stopping bullets with his chest, and—in this film—even with his eye. Nothing to sneeze at certainly, but not exactly on a par with redemption.

Perhaps I am taking matters too seriously myself. Better to relax and be grateful for a popular entertainment that invokes the notion of a self-sacrificing savior, however confused his portrayal. Despite its pretensions—sometimes *because of* them—Singer's film is eminently worth watching. Routh was clearly cast because he resembles Christopher Reeve, who wore the tights in the Superman films of the late 70's and early 80's. Routh has something of Reeve's graceful presence and, perhaps more important, gentleness of mien that made the earlier films work so well. As Lois Lane, the pretty Kate Bosworth is amusingly fierce and abrupt with the ever-mumbling, stumbling Clark. While she hasn't the motor-mouth ditziness that served Margot Kidder so well in the role, she does manage to dive into an arctic sea with uncommon aplomb when called upon to save her beloved Superman, momentarily rendered helpless by Kryptonite. Frank Langella's Perry White is appropriately crusty and peremptory and yet melts into childish awe before Superman's exploits. The movie really shines when Spacey's obsessed Lex Luthor takes the stage. He is a small bald man intent on punishing others for his lack of personal dimension. To make up for his inadequacies, he fashions himself a new Prometheus stealing, not fire from the gods, but potent alien crystals from Superman's arctic redoubt. He means to create a new continent with them, a sort of grand-scale Luthor Disneyland over which he will reign supreme. Of course, his continent will have global consequences, raising the ocean's level more catastrophically than Al Gore's global warming. When his girlfriend asks him if he really means to kill millions of people, he turns on her, a delighted gleam in his squinty eyes: "Billions and billions," he corrects her, as if he were Carl Sagan waxing monstrously galactic. Later, when Lois points out that the world's nations might have something to say about this, he snarls marvelously, "Bring it on!" Who said arrogance was minted in the Bush White House?

Singer may take these characters more seriously than he should, but he also contrives to remind us of their comic-book roots. His lighting technicians and cosmetologists have given the actors a glossy patina—call it Barbie Doll sheen—as if to remind us that, despite their physical suffering and emotional torment, they remain children's action figures. Still, I could have done without the scene in which Luthor thrusts a shard of Kryptonite into Superman's side. A symbol needn't be quite so penetrating. ◈

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Thoughts on July 4, 2006

In the late 1960's and early 70's, when I was at college and graduate school, the moral and social validity of meritocracy was beginning to be challenged by the schools and in the press. Aristocracy of blood, a final casualty of World War II, was the one thing worse than aristocracy of intellect and talent. Since then, meritocracy has joined aristocracy as (to torture Churchill's famous dictum) the two worst types of social system, including all the other kinds.

What possible alternative there might be between these two eminently workable but emphatically rejected systems and the old and now thoroughly discredited program "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs" is consequently a major issue implicit in the squabbles of our day, on which no one has made progress, as the stubbornly unreflective and unrepentant champions of mass democracy vainly persist in their attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable. In recent decades, it has seemed only libertarians believed in meritocracy, while nobody—with the exception, perhaps, of Leona Helmsley—had a good word to say for aristocracy, an inhuman institution on a moral plane with Aryanism and apartheid. Thus, conscientious readers of the *New York Times* must have been flabbergasted to read, in a recent *Books of the Times* feature, a laconic notice by Michiko Kakutani of the historian Gordon S. Wood's book *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different*, the thesis of which is that the intellectual brilliance and political achievement of the founding generation have not been matched since for the reason that, "as the common man rose to power in the decades following the Revolution, the inevitable consequence was the displacement from power of the uncommon man, the aristocratic man of ideas." Wood explains:

> [T]he revolutionary leaders were not merely victims of new circumstances; they were the progenitors of these new circumstances. . . . They helped create the changes that led to their own undoing, to the breakup of the kind of political and intellectual coherence they represented. Without intending to, they willingly destroyed the source of their own greatness.

Before Gordon Wood, I doubt that "the common man" had been typed by any American author since H.L. Mencken, that ribald antidemocrat and staunch admirer of the Hohenzollern.

Professor Wood's thesis is an expansive version of a succinct saying by the late Thomas P. Peardon, professor of political science at Barnard College, to the effect that America reached its apogee at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and has been going downhill ever since. Another way to put it is that the young American republic destroyed the untitled aristocracy of the colonial period, and that mass democracy, in turn, destroyed the Old Republic. Tocqueville, apprehending the transition early in the 1830's, felt himself obliged to make his peace with democracy from the belief that God desired a democratic future for the world. From our vantage, nearly two centuries later, to question the great French *aristo*'s assumption in this regard hardly appears an act of blasphemy. Willmoore Kendall, writing in the 1960's, wrote contemptuously of the irrelevance of diehard monarchists who, he believed, deserved to be ignored by realistic conservatives. Well, there's been a lot of water under Concord Bridge since the 1960's, too. Perhaps in his next book Gordon Wood will take a logical step further by arguing that the Founding Fathers made a fatal decision at Philadelphia in eschewing a titled American aristocracy and failing to crown George Washington king.

As late as the 1920's, the democratic ideal persisted among ontological conservatives, many of them Christians and a substantial number of those Catholics (including G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, and their fellow distributists), whose concern was for social justice and Church economic doctrine. In their day, eminently civilized people could be excused for believing that popular democracy had a civilized future. Since that time, the appeal of mass democracy has been not just to liberals but to anticommunist, market, and cornucopic conservatives alike, for whom it has functioned more or less satisfactorily, and often in conformity with meritocratic principle. But the enthusiasm mainline liberalism and conservatism feel for its benefits cannot disguise the unbidden truth that civilization and democracy are, finally, incompatible. If the history of the past two centuries proves anything, it is that a hierarchical society with a formal aristocracy is necessary to the formation of civilized values and the realization of these in great accomplishments, individual as well as collective, and to a vital society endowed with the capacity to sustain and defend itself over some appreciable period of time. The historical defenders of, and apologists for, aristocracy, with its implacable bias against industrial capitalism, commercial society, and an unrestricted suffrage, are now vindicated. Social, economic, and political egalitarianism has proved destructive of what advanced peoples used to call civilization.

Among the great works of historical literature produced in the last century is *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (1990), by the English historian David Cannadine. Though himself of middle-class extraction and seemingly a moderate Liberal, Cannadine treats his subject with critical sympathy and delicacy. Even so, he cannot bring himself to hazard the conclusion that strikes the reader as perfectly obvious: The decline of Great Britain, following the Third and Fourth Reform Acts and the agricultural crisis of the 1880's, from the status of a great power to that of a minor one was not merely concurrent with the decline of the British aristocracy; it was a direct result of it. In the same way, the decay of the United States as a civilization is traceable to its founders having cut the newly established nation away from the aristocratic institutions and traditions of the mother country.

This is not to say that British civiliza-

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tion was solely, or even largely, the work of the aristocratic classes. Rather, the civilization of which the aristocracy was an integral, authoritative part was the source of Britain's greatness. A true aristocracy is the flower of a nation, and that flower is, in some degree, a hothouse flower, like an orchid. Its value to society stems from its careful nurture over a very long period of time. Democrats protest that no class of people should enjoy special nurturing, not even by itself. That is also the individualist posture, which takes for granted that a nation is neither an organism nor a leviathan work of art, but an agglomeration of individuals whose material wellbeing is the *raison d'être* for the consensual association based on Locke's social contract.

Half a decade after the deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, Tocqueville recognized the choice confronting the American people in the Age of Jackson:

> If it be your intention to confer a certain elevation upon the human mind, and to teach it to regard the things of this world with generous feelings, to inspire men with a scorn of mere temporal advantage, to give birth to living convictions, and to keep alive the spirit of honorable devotedness; if you hold it to be a good thing to refine the habits, to embellish the manners, to cultivate the arts of a nation, and to promote the love of beauty and of renown; if you would constitute a people not unfitted to act with power upon all other nations, nor unprepared for those high enterprises which, whatever be the results of its efforts, will leave a name forever famous in time—if you believe such to be the principal object of society, you must avoid the government of democracy, which would be a very uncertain guide to the aim you have in view.
>
> But if you hold it to be expedient to divert the moral and intellectual activity of man to the production of comfort, and to the acquirement of the necessities of life; if a clear understanding be more profitable to a man than genius; if your object be not to stimulate the virtues of heroism, but to create habits of peace; if you had rather witness vices than crimes and are content to meet with fewer noble deeds, provided offences be diminished in the same proportion; if, instead of living in the midst of a brilliant state of society, you are contented to have prosperity all around you; if, in short, you are of the opinion that the principal object of government is not to confer the greatest possible share of power and glory upon the body of the nation, but to ensure the greatest degree of enjoyment and the least degree of misery to each of the individuals who compose it—if such be your desires, you can have no surer means of satisfying them than by equalizing the conditions of men, and establishing democratic institutions.

Now Professor Wood tells us that this choice had indeed been made by the previous generation of America's leaders, and I believe he is right. Long before the South was conquered by the North, the die was cast in favor of the common man over and against the aristocrat, and, in time, the mass man over the republican. The results of that decision, like Sir Christopher Wren's London, lie all around us.

Surveying these, we ought to be able to discern that it was the wrong one. (The conclusion holds even if we grant that, as Tocqueville believed, democracy was to some degree inevitable in the West, since the "success" of egalitarianism in America was significantly responsible for the fact of its "inevitability" beyond America's shores. It is easy to object, for instance, that Great Britain, which still has a monarchy, an hereditary aristocracy, and a class system, is today scarcely more civilized than the United States. Yet the democratic influence of her cousin across the Atlantic was certainly a major influence in the process of Britain's decay, as it has been in the downward trajectories, both cultural and political, in the history of the other Western European nations since 1787.) Deprived of an authoritative aristocracy to direct its government, uphold a coherent social structure, fight its wars, and maintain high standards in learning and in the arts, Western civilization has approached near collapse, as the enfranchised rude republican of the 19th century has devolved steadily into the "empowered" mass man of the 20th and 21st, to the point where, today, democratic society exists only in the anthropological sense. The devastation is systemic, endemic, and all-pervasive, embracing government and public life, the professions, the arts, manners, morals, and religion. Modern Americans no longer recognize or appreciate civilization. They have ceased to be able to govern themselves, and they have ceased to be capable of thought, in part because mass democracy encourages thinking about everything in the mass—abstractly and statistically, according to the standards set by the social "sciences." The mass man, Ortega said, thinks he is perfect. That is as good an explanation as any for the secularization of modern society and of religion itself, as only people who are aware of their radical imperfection can be expected to believe in the Christian God and to observe His commandments.

Aristotle taught that the form of government that both honors and embodies virtue is the aristocratic one. The tragedy for societies that destroy their aristocracies is that reconstituting or reestablishing them is nearly impossible. Evelyn Waugh once remarked that the problem with forcing the aristocrat into middle-class pursuits is that he thereby becomes middle-class himself. There are still a few real aristocrats to be found in mass-democratic societies, but they wield no power or influence whatsoever, having been replaced by the faux aristocracy we call "the elite," which possesses all the wealth—and then some—the aristocracy formerly controlled, but nothing else. To hold the "elite" in its proper place, a titled aristocracy is required.

Americans are wont to pride their nation before the world as a country of "freedom." So it was, and—to a lesser extent, owing to the tyrannical temptations of mass democracy—so it remains. Yet Britain, too, is a free country, with a long history of political liberty, in spite of her monarchical and aristocratic traditions. We in the United States, owing to decisions made by the founding generation, have subsequently equated freedom with equality, and equality with democracy. America, in her ideological obsession with republicanism, first, and democracy later, almost from the beginning left the concept of civilization out of the political equation entirely—perhaps from the conviction that government equals civilization. Whatever the reason, we find ourselves stuck with the results: an "aristocracy" comprising the likes of the Clintons, the Bushes, the Gateses, the Buffets, the Waltons, and the Trumps. Is it on account of my Tory ancestors alone that, when the crowd sings "My Country 'Tis of Thee," I hear, at the back of my mind, the atavistic echo of the blood—"God Save the Queen"? ◈

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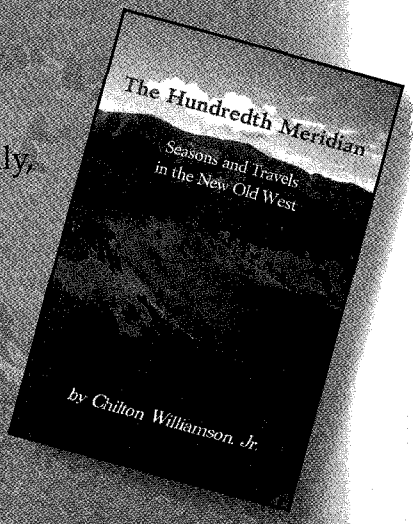
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Seasons and Travels in the New Old West



What the Old West had that the New West increasingly lacks are, finally, reality and dignity—the reality of what is basic to human experience, the dignity that comes from acceptance of the physical trials, dangers, hardships, and experience which accompany that reality.

—From the Foreword

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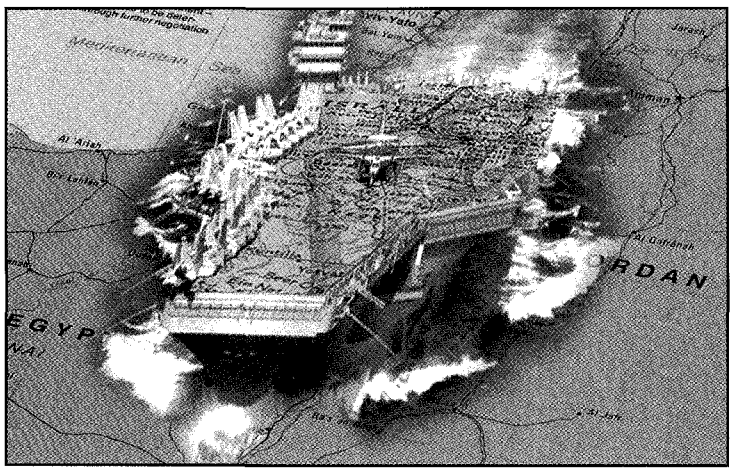

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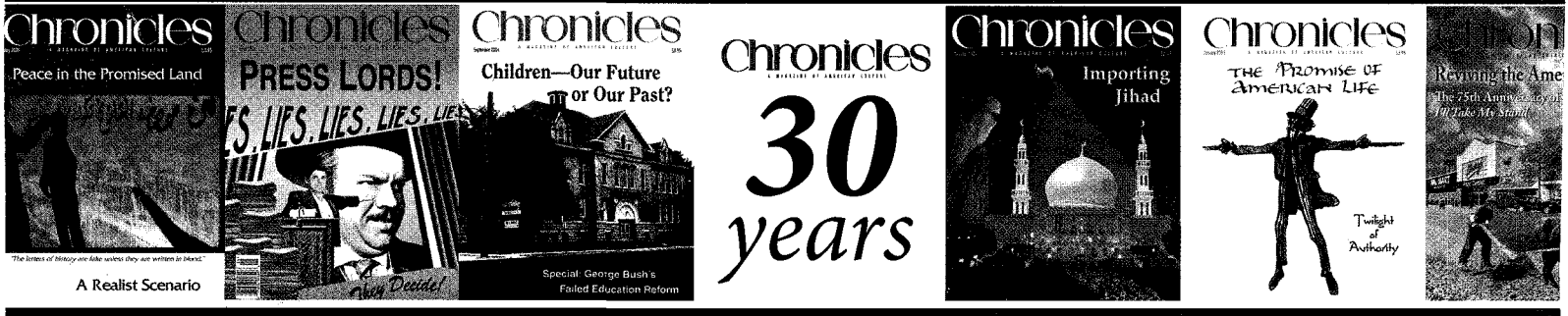

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